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THOMAS J. JEROME

THE CHRIST

THE EVIDENCE OF HIS DIVINITY REVIEWED FROM THE STANDPOINT OF A LAWYER

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THE EVIDENCE OF HIS DIVINITY REVIEWED FROM THE STANDPOINT OF A LAWYER

BY

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PREFACE

In writing this book I have considered the Bible as a record containing the evidence of the divinity of Jesus Christ and have attempted to apply to that record the same rules of interpretation that a lawyer would apply to a record in court.

No effort has been made to walk in beaten paths, and I have consulted no commentary to ascertain the meaning attached to any part of the record by others; but I have simply sought to draw from the testimony and from the facts and circumstances connected with my subject such legitimate inferences and deductions as I thought the record warranted.

The necessity for a work of this kind is apparent to every one who desires to assist in the spread of the Christian religion. Although nearly two thousand years have rolled by since Christ completed his mission on earth, only a very small percentage of the population of the world has as yet accepted the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Many intelligent Christians are unable to defend their faith in Christ against the criticism that is daily hurled against the doctrine of the divinity of

the Christ. Learned theologians and college professors have treated the subject with great ability, but much that they have written is beyond the grasp of the ordinary reader. What the world really needs is to have this doctrine presented to the people in such practical and tangible shape that the great masses can comprehend it and use the arguments to repel the assaults of infidelity as well as to strengthen their own faith.

No attempt has been made in this work to treat the subject in a scholarly manner. My desire has been simply to present a lawyer's brief on the subject and to argue the question in a plain and practical way. This brief is submitted to the public as a court in the hope that it may serve to confirm the faith of Christians and also lead nonbelievers to accept the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

THOMAS J. JEROME.

March, 1917.

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INTRODUCTION

RELIGION has never made a stronger appeal to the thought of the world than it now makes. Japan has just held, under the inspiration of the government, a parliament of the religions of that country for the purpose of more strongly enforcing the sanctions of morality. The same need that has been officially voiced in Japan is felt in China, and the leaders of New China have not been slow to express their conception of the necessity of founding the new government on an ethical basis that shall find support in religion.

There have been manifested in Europe and America in the past twelve months signs of a marvelous quickening of religious consciousness. Reports from every country in Europe indicate that the chapels, churches, and cathedrals are crowded with worshipers at every service. Our book reviews show that in America during the past two years books dealing directly or indirectly with religious subjects far exceed, both in the number written and in volumes sold, any other line of books on serious subjects except the large sale of books on the subject of the war during the first few months of the year.

On distinctly religious themes there is no subject of more vital interest to-day than the significance of the life of Christ. Perhaps the most significant tendency in religious thought just now is the revolt against the rationalism and liberalism that have prevailed more or less for fifty years. This is a healthy sign. While there is apparent a definite revolt and a definite break with rationalism, it is not at all certain that we shall return to the old orthodoxy. We shall perhaps embody its spirit, but not its letter.

Central in all our thinking to-day is the divinity of Jesus Christ. Whether we shall state our present belief in terms of the old Trinitarian formula remains to be seen, but the most vital article in to-day's creed is that Christ is God. We welcome, therefore, any book that can throw any new light on this subject.

The author of "The Christ: His Divinity Reviewed" has written from his own viewpoint, that of a lawyer-layman. He does not approach the subject from the theologian's viewpoint; he does not clothe his thought in the customary garb either of the old orthodox school or of the school of higher criticism. He merely examines the record from a lawyer's standpoint and tells us what he finds. To the average reader some of his conclusions may

seem bizarre, even startling; but all will agree that these conclusions are his own, that his treatment is original. The important thing about the book is that the author finds the Christ to be none other than the Son of God, the second person of the Godhead.

Every pastor and every Sunday school teacher who has met the inquiries of young men as to the divinity of Jesus Christ has felt the need of a convincing book to place in their hands. The author writes for the very purpose of proving from the record that Jesus is the Christ of God. There can be no question as to the need for just such a discussion as is here undertaken. For many years past there have been those in the highest positions of honor and of responsibility that have denied the deity of Jesus Christ.

And we believe that the idea of deity is a necessity to the enforcement of any scheme of morality or ethics. Without a Christ who is God, Christianity becomes a mouthful of pious platitudes and the New Testament a beautiful bundle of good advice.

We need more lawyers to advocate the cause of Christ and more to plead his right to command the hearts and consciences of men. JOHN F. KIRK.

March, 1917.

"And Simon Peter answered and said,
Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

(Matthew xvi. 16.)

The Christ: The Evidence of His Divinity Reviewed from the Standpoint of a Lawyer

CHAPTER I

Miracles

1. Jesus Christ laid down his own rule of evidence by which the question of his divinity was to be settled.

According to the record, the direct question as to the divinity of Jesus Christ was asked of him by John the Baptist, and he laid down his own rule of evidence by which the controversy might be settled. He appealed to his miracles, and upon this claim he rested his whole case.

> "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matt. xi. 2-5.)

At another time the Jews came to Jesus in the temple and asked practically the same question that John the Baptist had propounded from the prison, and they received the same answer.

> "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." (John x. 24, 25.)

Jesus, therefore, laid down the rule as to the kind and quantum of evidence necessary to settle the whole question of his divinity. An appeal to the miracles he was daily performing, if we are to believe the record as to these things, furnished the only really conclusive evidence that could have been produced to convince the people of the divinity of Jesus.

2. The rule of evidence prescribed by Jesus was effective and produced the desired result with many people.

The rule of evidence laid down by Jesus as the test of his claim to divinity appealed to the people of all classes; and, according to the record, many thousands were convinced by the performance of miracles that he was the Christ, the Son of God.

The five thousand people who followed Jesus and who were miraculously fed on the five barley loaves and two small fishes were persuaded by this miracle to believe that he was the Messiah.

> "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." (John vi. 14.)

The restoration of Lazarus to life convinced many of the Jews.

> "Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him." (John xi. 45.)

The simple assertion on the part of Jesus that he was divine would have been answered with scorn by all classes of people. It was necessary that something should be done by Jesus that man could not do in order to convince them of his divinity, and the power to work miracles furnished a convincing argument.

3. Jesus Christ wrought miracles of his own power and not by direct authority from God, like the prophets.

In discussing the value of miracles as proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ we are confronted at

the very threshold of the argument by two very important questions:

(1) Did Jesus actually perform the miracles attributed to him?

(2) Even if it should be proved or admitted that he did, how does that show that he was any more divine than the prophets of old who are represented as having wrought miracles also?

Possibly it would be better to dispose of the second proposition first, since, even if it should be proved or admitted that Jesus performed miracles, if he thereby did nothing more than inspired men could do, the fact of the performance of the miracles would accomplish little toward establishing the doctrine of his divinity.

It is true that the Bible represents man as having worked miracles, and we are told that Elijah and Elisha even raised the dead. Critics contend, therefore, that at most the performance of miracles by Jesus Christ, if it be admitted that he wrought such miracles, simply proves that he was merely a man whose works were approved of God and that God gave him the power to do these things just as the same power was given to other great and holy men.

There are four answers to this criticism:

(*a*) The miracles wrought by the prophets were

performed in special and peculiar cases, generally brought about by divine guidance, and the power to do the miracles is always attributed to God.

In the case of the raising of the widow's son from the dead by Elijah, the record expressly states that Elijah was specially sent to the widow and that he prayed directly to God for power to restore the dead child to life. (1 Kings xvii.)

In the case of the Shunamite's son, restored to life by Elisha, the record shows that Elisha first sent his servant with his staff, with instructions to place the staff on the dead child; but the dead was not thus awakened. Elisha then went to the home of the Shunamite woman; and after going into the room with the child he shut the door and "prayed unto the Lord," and the child was restored to life. (2 Kings iv. 33.)

(*b*) According to the record, Jesus Christ possessed the power of himself to raise the dead, a power that no man ever possessed or attempted to exercise. He says of himself:

> "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." (John v. 21.)

(*c*) Jesus not only had the power of himself to raise the dead and work other miracles, but, accord-

ing to the record, he possessed the power to commission others to do so.

> "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. . . . Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." (Matt. x. 1, 8.)

(*d*) The disciples, being empowered by Christ Jesus to work miracles, afterwards performed miracles in his name. The lame man who was laid at the gate of the temple to ask alms of those who entered the temple to worship was healed by Peter in Christ's name.

> "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." (Acts iii. 6.)

This was the first miracle performed by any of the apostles after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, and in consequence of it the great persecution of the Christians that started at Jerusalem was begun.

Peter and John were imprisoned for healing the lame man; and having been brought out of prison the next day and being questioned as to the author-

ity by which they had healed him, Peter declared expressly that it had been done in the name of Jesus Christ.

> "And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him does this man stand here before you whole." (Acts iv. 5-10.)

God never delegated to any human being the authority to confer on others the power to perform miracles, and no mere man ever possessed the power to work miracles of himself. Hence the very facts, if we are to believe the record, that Jesus Christ possessed the power to work miracles of himself and that he had the authority to delegate miraculous power to others, show beyond all controversy that he was divine, that he was God.

4. The biographers of Jesus who testify as to the miracles measure up to the standard of credible witnesses, and they are corroborated by the facts and circumstances.

I return now to the first proposition and take up for examination the question as to whether Christ actually performed the miracles attributed to him.

It is unnecessary here to enter into a discussion of the question as to how miracles are performed, whether by a violation or suspension of the order of nature or by the expression of a supernatural will in accordance with the laws of nature; but it is sufficient to say that all thoughtful men recognize the fact that a miracle can be produced only by divine power.

I lay down this simple proposition for discussion in this chapter:

Nothing can perform a miracle except divinity.

Jesus Christ performed miracles.

Therefore Jesus Christ is divine.

I do not think the first premise in the foregoing syllogism will be seriously disputed; and I apprehend that the conclusion will be as readily accepted, provided the minor premise is established. I recognize the fact, however, that a real and serious controversy hinges about the minor premise.

Those who originally wrote the life of Jesus Christ as contained in the four Gospels present to us the picture of one going from place to place working miracles almost daily; and we must either believe this picture to be a pure fabrication, or we must confess the divinity of the one who wrought the miracles.

In ordinary controversies the genuineness of the record is admitted, but in attempting to maintain the affirmative of the issue as to whether Jesus Christ actually performed the miracles attributed to him by his biographers we are confronted with the fact that the genuineness of the record is challenged. However, the existence at present of the books composing the New Testament cannot be denied; and I propose to take up here the question of the credibility of the witnesses, leaving for discussion in subsequent chapters the question whether the books were written at the times claimed by the friends of Jesus or by the authors named.

These books name certain persons who, it is alleged, were the disciples of Jesus and witnesses of the miracles described therein.

Now, the testimony of a witness is strengthened or weakened according to the opportunities the witness has had for knowing the facts about which he

testifies, the influences that might becloud his reason or warp his judgment, his prejudices, bias, disposition, temperament, character, motive, or interest.

I propose now to examine the testimony from these standpoints and to marshal the evidence in favor of the genuineness of the record in which the story of the miracles of Christ is recorded.

(1) Two of the biographers, Matthew and John, claim to have been eyewitnesses of the miracles. Thus they had the very finest opportunity for knowing the truth of the facts about which they testify.

> "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem." (Acts x. 39.)

The testimony of an eyewitness is the highest type of evidence as to the happening of an event known to jurisprudence. A document is the best evidence of a contract, but no other kind of evidence is equal in probative force to the testimony of one who says that he actually witnessed an event described by him. Such evidence is not hearsay nor merely corrobative or supporting, but it is positive in character and of the most convincing nature.

To those who trustingly believe in the miracles of Jesus it may or may not be unfortunate that no miracle ever wrought a permanent, visible effect.

The dead were restored to life, but not to immortal life; and none of those who were miraculously rescued from the grave are here as living witnesses.

I submit that the witnesses had ample opportunity for observing and knowing the facts and that they ought to be believed unless they are discredited in some way.

(2) No known influences existed to becloud their reason or warp their judgment and thus to cause them to record such facts if they had never happened. On the contrary, the influences that surrounded them would naturally have caused them to reject the doctrine of Christ's divinity, even though they were convinced that it was true.

The bitterest persecution immediately followed their announcement that Jesus had performed the miracles and that he had risen from the dead and that he was divine. Their environment was such as to cause them to renounce the truth, if they had been disposed to yield to the temptation, rather than to fabricate a false story of events that never happened.

There is no evidence of any evil influences that would have induced these men to write such facts if they had never happened; but, on the contrary, even the evidence furnished by other historians of their

time who were hostile to the Christian religion shows that the natural and temporary interests of these witnesses would have prompted them to leave the miracles unrecorded.

(3) There is not a scintilla of evidence of any prejudice or bias on the part of the witnesses. They were Jews trained to observe the laws of Moses regulating the worship of God, and it is unreasonable to suppose that any Jew of that day would have attempted to construct a false religion that tolerated no other religion and sought to displace the worship of God as prescribed by Moses. They necessarily must have appreciated the fact that such a course would cause persecution and death.

It is perfectly natural that men who had followed one for three years and had become so impressed with his character as to write his biography would be inclined to magnify facts that tended to glorify their hero; but it is neither natural nor reasonable to say that they would manufacture the facts, warp and woof, and construct a fabricated story that could be so easily disproved.

(4) There is nothing in the disposition, temperament, or character of the witnesses to discredit their testimony. No charge has ever been preferred against them in this respect.

(5) No ulterior motive that could have prompted the biographers of Jesus to credit him with miracles never performed has ever been shown, and men do not manufacture falsehoods in regard to religious matters without a bad motive of some kind.

It is a natural tendency of a biographer to exaggerate the virtues of his hero; and the greater the love of the writer for the object of his eulogy, the greater the temptation to magnify the merits and conceal the demerits of his ideal. But evidently one who yields to this natural frailty would be expected to do so in a natural way. If Christ did not perform the miracles attributed to him by these witnesses, then he was nothing but a man; and if these writers had set about to create a fictitious character, they naturally and inevitably would have made an earthly hero.

According to their own record, if he was simply a man, they foolishly abandoned their own avocations and followed him at his simple bidding, tramping over the country with him for three years without pecuniary reward or earthly glory; and after his death they suffered persecution for teaching and preaching what they knew to be a lie, and that without reward or the hope of reward.

(6) The witnesses were entirely disinterested.

At the time the four Gospels were written the writers had received no reward; but the new religion they were preaching had caused them to suffer persecution, prison, privations, and stripes, and the only prospect before them suggested further suffering. Indeed, they could not have expected anything else; because Jesus, when he first commissioned them to preach, had instructed them to provide neither gold, silver, brass, scrip, shoes, nor staves for their journey and had warned them that they would be hated by all men and brought before councils, governors, and kings, and scourged even in the synagogues for preaching these things. (Matt. x. 9-22.)

> "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." (John xvi. 2.)

5. The miracles were not mentioned by contemporary historians because they did not want to admit them, and to deny them would simply have strengthened the evidence in support of the genuineness of the Christian record.

Critics tell us that Josephus and Tacitus wrote histories almost contemporaneously with the Gospels by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John concerning the same period of time and writing of the same

people among whom these apostles labored, both writing during the first century, and that neither Josephus nor Tacitus mentions any particular miracles as having been performed by Jesus Christ.

I reply to this criticism by saying that Tacitus hated the Christians so bitterly that he actually approved of the cruel persecution of them by Nero, and Josephus loved them but little better.

These miracles, according to the record, did not occur in privacy, like the pretended supernatural visions of Mohammed, but they were performed openly and in the presence of the avowed enemies of Christ.

It is perfectly reasonable to suppose that many persons who had been healed of some infirmity or raised from the dead were alive at the time Josephus and Tacitus wrote and at the time the four Gospels were written. Josephus wrote his "Antiquities of the Jews" within forty-five years after the resurrection, and Tacitus wrote about the same time or possibly a little later. The four Gospels were written between 60 and 90 A.D. So a man twenty years of age when many of the miracles were performed would have been less than sixty-five when these books were written. Four authors mention the miracles; and if their record was untrue, living wit-

nesses could have been produced to refute and discredit the record.

The record of the miracles of Jesus bears internal evidence of its genuineness. The accounts of the miracles in many instances are quite inconsistent with the idea that they are fabrications invented for the purpose of deceiving future generations.

Names are given in some accounts of the miracles, in other instances the miracles are mentioned as having been performed in the presence of a number of people and under circumstances that gave great notoriety to the events, and in a few cases prominent persons are mentioned as having been connected in some way with the miracles.

Take, for instance, the restoration to life of the son of the widow of Nain. The name of neither the son nor his mother is given, but the record expressly states that Jesus had just come over to Nain from Capernaum and that "many of his disciples went with him and much people." As they reached the gate of the city of Nain "there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her." (Luke vii. 11, 12.)

The city of Nain ("The Beautiful") was a well-known place in that day, and it still exists. It is

near Mount Tabor and overlooks the Plain of Esdraelon. So in this instance the place of the performance of the miracle is given, and the allegation is that it took place in the presence of "much people" and that they were wonderfully impressed.

> "And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people." (Luke vii. 16.)

The servant of a centurion, a Roman officer of Capernaum, was healed of the palsy. The allegation is that the centurion sent unto Jesus the elders of the Jews and that they besought Jesus to come and heal the servant, giving as a reason for their insistence the fact that the centurion loved the Jewish nation and had built the Jews a synagogue. It is also alleged that when the Jewish elders who had been sent to induce Jesus to heal the sick man returned to the centurion's house they found the servant healed. (Luke vii. 1-10.)

The story of this miracle was written only about thirty years after the event and before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. Would the biographers of Jesus have dared to make these allegations in writing if the narrative had been false? The very leaders of the Jews are made to

take part in this miracle. A high Roman officer, who was undoubtedly well known and much esteemed by these elders of the Jews because he had built them a synagogue, is also a participant; and the startling allegation is made that the miracle was performed without the servant having been seen by Jesus. It is unreasonable to suppose that the apostles, starting out into the world to propagate the religion of Jesus Christ and knowing that all they wrote would be immediately challenged by hostile Jews and unsympathizing Gentiles, would have fabricated such a story if it had been false. Although no names are called in this instance, the persons connected with the story could easily have been found and inquiry as to the truth of the allegations made and the record refuted if such allegations were not true. The master of the servant was the centurion at Capernaum, and the Roman officer who was kind enough to the Jews to build them a synagogue and those sent to find Jesus were the elders of the Jews at Capernaum.

A daughter of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue and a prominent Jew, was restored to life. (Mark v. 22-42.)

In this instance the name of a well-known person is used, the place is given, and the allegation is that

Jesus stopped the tumult and put those that wept and wailed out of the room and restored the girl to life in the presence of her father and mother. If the daughter of Jairus had not been restored to life, would Mark have dared to write such a falsehood within the lifetime of the daughter and possibly within the lifetime of her parents?

Peter, at the time Jesus was arrested, cut off the right ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, in the presence of the captain of the band and the officer and soldiers, and Jesus healed up the wound. (John xviii. 10; Luke xxiii. 51.)

If this did not happen as alleged, why would John and Luke have risked recording such a falsehood? The allegation is that this miracle was performed on a very notable occasion, and the truth about the matter could have been ascertained very easily.

The most remarkable miracle attributed to Jesus Christ was the restoration of Lazarus to life after he had been dead four days and after putrefaction of the body had commenced. The allegation is that this event happened in the presence of many people who had come to be with Mary and Martha; that numbers of the Jews, on account of this miracle, were convinced of the divine mission of Jesus; and that, in consequence of this fact, "the chief priests

consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus." (John xii. 10, 11.)

Would the biographers of Christ have given names and places with such particularity if the whole story as to the miracles was a fabrication and a falsehood, when they had every reason to believe that some of those mentioned were alive at the time the story was written?

If the miracles never happened, and if the names of persons and places were fictitious, would they have recorded the miracles as ever having taken place at all, when they were bound to know that the record would be challenged immediately and utterly refuted?

The miracles of Jesus, as recorded by his biographers, touched nature at every point. He exercised dominion over life and death and restored the life-blood into putrefied human bodies. He controlled the intellect of man and drove madness from his brain. The sight of the eye yielded to his touch, and the blind were made to see. He spoke to the dumb, and the dead organs of articulation caught his voice and responded with his praise. He put the power of hearing into deaf ears and enabled them

to hear his words of wisdom. He commanded the muscles and nerves of impotent limbs to assume their strength, and paralytics arose and walked. He spoke to inanimate nature, and a fig tree withered, the winds of a storm ceased, and the lashing waves of the sea subsided.

Looking back across two thousand years of the world's history into the days of these miracles, granting that they took place as alleged, it seems wonderfully strange to us that every human being who was then old enough to think and reason did not become convinced of the divinity of Jesus Christ and accept him as the promised Saviour of the world.

We must remember, however, that miracles did not mean to the Jews of Judea in those days what they would now mean to us. The Jews had been taught that their prophets and holy men performed miracles; and, therefore, to them the power to work miracles did not necessarily indicate that the possessor of such power was a divine being. They did not distinguish between one who wrought miracles of his own power and one who obtained such special power from God. The fact that Jesus avowed that he was also God or the Son of God only aggravated matters for the Jews; because, according to their

law, for a man to assert that he was God or the equal of God constituted blasphemy and was punishable with death.

This did not excuse the Jews, however. If Jesus Christ did not perform the miracles attributed to him by his biographers, then he was an impostor; and it is inconceivable that God would empower an impostor to work miracles. Therefore, if he actually wrought the miracles, the Jews ought to have accepted him as the promised Messiah. They ought to have recognized the fact that Christ claimed to be God and to work the miracles of his own power; and then they ought to have reflected that one who set up a spurious claim to divinity could not perform miracles at all, since God would not grant this power to an impostor.

The same may be said of those who reject the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus, but accept him as an inspired teacher and expounder of a new religion. His biographers declare emphatically that he did perform the miracles and that he plainly asserted his divinity; and if these things are not true, then he was an impostor and not even a good man.

Again, if the story of the miracles of Jesus is not true, then the authors of the four Gospels are un-

truthful historians and are unworthy of belief as to anything they wrote.

Pagan and Jewish historians tell us that Christianity existed both in Jewish and in Gentile countries during the latter half of the first century. Josephus tells us that Christians were persecuted and slain in Jerusalem prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70, only thirty-seven years after Christ ended his mission on earth, according to his biographers; and Tacitus tells us that they were slain by thousands in Rome under Nero in the year 64, or only about thirty years after the crucifixion of Christ.

How had Christianity originated and spread at that time if the story of the miracles is untrue? Had the people learned Christianity from the New Testament Scriptures? This is incredible, unless the miracles had been performed, because the people would know for themselves whether the record was true in this respect. A man fifty years of age then would have been twenty when some of the miracles were performed, if such events actually happened; and if not, the falsity of the record would have been known.

The people could not have learned Christianity at that time from the preaching of the apostles if

the miracles had not been performed. It is inconceivable that the people in great numbers could have been brought to believe in Christ to such an extent as to cause them to abandon the religion of their fathers and adopt a new religion simply by the preaching of the apostles. On the other hand, if Christ had performed the miracles and had risen from death, as alleged, then the apostles could have appealed to the people by citing these supernatural events as within the personal knowledge of the people or could have asked them to investigate for themselves. In this way only could the results shown by secular history have been obtained. Though Jesus "spake as never man spake" and uttered truths so sublime as to cause the mightiest intellects of the world to yield allegiance to him, it is very improbable, if not altogether impossible, that those teachings, within thirty-five years after they were uttered, could have so convinced the people of the divinity of Christ as to cause them to suffer martyrdom in "immense multitudes" under Nero, as described by Tacitus, or to suffer death by stoning in the streets of Jerusalem, as described by Josephus.

The entire record of the miracles of Jesus had been written at the time Josephus and Tacitus wrote

their histories; and the author of each of the four Gospels asserted most positively that he had personally witnessed most of the miracles, and in many instances names, places, and minute details are given, and prominent people are mentioned as having been connected with the miracles.

Why did not Tacitus and Josephus deny the miracles as recorded in the four Gospels if the record was untrue?

John himself was alive at the time Josephus and Tacitus wrote. Is it likely that they would have wanted a controversy with John over the question as to the actual performance of the miracles?

Possibly John could have brought forward as witnesses the son of the widow of Nain and the daughter of Jairus themselves. They would not have been as old as John, who is said to have lived until A.D. 100 and, according to tradition at least, was the only one of the twelve who died a natural death.

The bold announcement in these biographies that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that he had wrought miracles that no one but an omnipotent God could perform, and that a new religion superseding all other religions of the world was presented to the people and claimed their undivided allegiance

was a startling and daring challenge to all humanity and was recognized as such by Jews and pagans.

The leaders of the Jewish and pagan religions attempted to destroy the Christian religion in the only way possible. They refused to call attention to the chief evidence of the divinity of its Founder —his miracles. They refused even to deny the miracles, because they knew that by denying them they would multiply a thousandfold the evidence of their genuineness.

Instead of denying the miracles, Josephus says that Jesus "was a doer of wonderful works." ("Antiquities," Book XVIII., Chapter III.) This testimony of Josephus corroborates the record very strongly.

6. The question whether Jesus Christ wrought miracles is one of fact simply, but the evidence should be stronger than that necessary to prove an ordinary fact.

Perhaps the most plausible and powerful argument ever hurled against miracles was made by Hume. His argument is as follows:

A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be im-

agined. . . . It is no miracle that a man seemingly in good health should die on a sudden; because such a kind of death, though more unusual than any other, has yet been frequently observed to happen. But it is a miracle that a dead man should come to life, because that has never been observed in any age or country. . . . The consequence is that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish; or, briefly, it is contrary to experience that a miracle should be true, but not contrary to experience that testimony should be false.

Viewed in its strongest light, this argument of Hume simply lays down a very stringent rule as to the quantum of evidence necessary to prove a miracle. He says that the falsity of the evidence must be more miraculous than the miracle itself: (1) Because a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; (2) because a miracle is contrary to experience.

It may be readily admitted that a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature and contrary to human experience, and yet the evidence in favor of miracles may be plenary and sufficient. If one should say that a man of his own power had performed a miracle, no sensible person would believe the assertion; but we are not talking about a man. The allegation in the record is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, he who created and established the

laws of nature and, therefore, possessed the power to change or to violate such laws, performed the miracles attributed to him and that he did these things of his own power. (John v. 21.)

> "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." (John i. 3.)

The question whether miracles were performed by Jesus Christ, as alleged in the record, is one of fact simply. Owing to the fact that a miracle is contrary to nature, the evidence to establish such fact should be clear, strong, cogent, and convincing.

The burden of the issue is upon those who assert that Jesus Christ wrought miracles, and the evidence necessary to meet this burden should be stronger than what is required to prove an ordinary fact. A miracle is unnatural, unreasonable, improbable, and also impossible except through divine power. Therefore it was that Jesus, replying to the direct question as to his Messiahship asked by John the Baptist, based his claim upon his miracles and boldly asserted that he wrought the miracles of his own power. Standing in the presence of the leading Jews of the world, who were even then seeking to kill him because he had healed an impotent man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem,

where he had gone to attend the feast, he defiantly declared that he was the Son of God and that he even raised the dead of his own will. (John v. 1-22.)

As a striking proof of the truth of the narratives of the miracles, it is recorded that the miracles wrought by Jesus did not always convince the people who actually witnessed them.

> "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him." (John xii. 37.)

It is undoubtedly true that the writer of the record tried to convince his readers of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Let us suppose, then, that the miracles attributed to Jesus in the record never happened and that the record of them is a fabrication. Is it reasonable that his biographers, after having declared that Jesus based his claim to divinity so largely on the fact of his miracles, would have admitted that the performance of many miracles had failed to convince those who had actually witnessed them? The author of a fictitious Christ would never have made such an admission.

John tells us that the miracles were recorded for the express purpose of thereby inducing those who

should read the record to believe that Jesus was the Christ.

> "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John xx. 31.)

Another circumstance that tends strongly to prove the genuineness of the record is the fact that Jesus never performed a miracle as a mere exhibition of power. He often charged those who had been healed by him to keep the matter a secret; and when Pilate sent him to Herod during his trial, he refused to perform a miracle to satisfy even the curiosity of the king.

> "And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing." (Luke xxiii. 8, 9.)

A writer of a fictitious story might very reasonably have clothed his hero with supernatural power, but he never would have thought about hiding his glory under a bushel nor of making him refuse the request of a king.

It is a very significant fact that all those who deny the miracles of Jesus also deny his divinity, and all who admit the miracles also admit his divinity. Jesus weighed the credulity of the human mind with wonderful accuracy when he answered John the Baptist that his miracles furnished sufficient evidence of his character as the Christ.

The testimony of St. Paul is highly important and ought not to be overlooked. It is generally conceded that Paul wrote before the year 58 A.D., or only about twenty-five years after the miracle of the resurrection is alleged to have taken place, and the authenticity of his epistles has never been seriously questioned. The four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are claimed to have been written between the years 60 and 90 A.D., or a few years after the date of Paul's epistles. We know that Paul lays great stress upon the doctrine of the resurrection, the greatest of all miracles. If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead as alleged in the record, why did Paul make the doctrine of the resurrection the foundation of the new Church, when he was bound to know that thousands of persons were living at the time his epistles were written who could utterly refute the whole story?

Churches were established at Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, and other places within twenty-five years of the date of the resurrection as set forth in the record; and judging from the tone of Paul's letters, these Churches had been founded upon the doctrine of the resurrection. History teaches us that communication was constant and comparatively swift between those places and Jerusalem, even at that date. Did not these people know something of the truth about the doctrine they professed to believe?

The story of the miracles is a part of the same testimony upon which the entire Church of Christ is built. If Jesus Christ did not perform the miracles attributed to him, then his biographers are false witnesses, and the entire structure of the Church must crumble and fall. It is impossible to believe, with Renan and others of his ilk, that Jesus himself, as well as his disciples, was deceived and actually believed that he wrought miracles, but did not. When the witnesses say that they actually stood by and saw Lazarus restored to life after having been dead for four days, they either assert a known truth or a known falsehood. There is no middle ground on this question. The testimony as to the miracles of Jesus Christ is either true, or else God,

who thundered the law from Mount Sinai that he would not divide honors with anything, has permitted a false religion, founded upon the most stupendous falsehood ever uttered, to supersede the system of worship established directly by him—the worship of God through sacrifices—and has allowed the worship of an impostor to divide honors with him and to grow into the greatest institution on the earth.

I respectfully submit that the evidence in favor of the miracles of Jesus Christ is of such a character as to command the respect and confidence of all reasonable people.

CHAPTER II

The Incarnation

1. The doctrine of the incarnation is proved by prophecy as well as by the story of the Christ as contained in the four Gospels.

The evidence upon which the doctrine of the incarnation is chiefly based is twofold:

(1) The prophecies relating to the Messiah as contained in the Old Testament.

(2) The story of the Christ as contained in the New Testament.

The first of these propositions involves the further issue as to the credibility of prophetic utterances, and the second depends upon the authenticity and genuineness of the record as to the birth and life of Jesus Christ.

If it be granted that there is a God and that he is disposed to reveal his will to human beings at all, then it necessarily follows that things present, past, and future may be disclosed to men through the agency of divinely inspired prophets.

Upon the question of the value and genuineness of prophecy, as well as its relation to Jesus Christ,

I quote from Dean Stanley's "Lectures on the Jewish Church" as follows:

> There can be no doubt, for example, that Amos foretold the captivity and return of Israel, and Micah the fall of Samaria, and Ezekiel the fall of Jerusalem, and Isaiah the fall of Tyre, and Jeremiah the limits of the captivity. It was the distinguishing work of the Jewish people that their golden age was not in the past, but in the future; that their greatest hero (as they deemed him to be) was not their founder, but their founder's latest descendant. Their traditions, their fancies, their glories gathered round the head, not of a chief or warrior or sage that had been, but of a King, a Deliverer, a Prophet who was to come. Of this singular expectation the prophets were, if not the chief authors, at least the chief exponents.

2. The prophecies concerning the Christ are so plain that their application to him cannot be doubted.

The prophecies concerning the incarnation are the plainest and most explicit prophetic utterances to be found in the Bible.

> "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. vii. 14.)

Matthew declares emphatically that this prophecy refers to the birth of Jesus Christ. After relating what the angel said to Joseph about the birth of Jesus, he says:

> "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Matt. i. 22, 23.)

Another prophecy from Isaiah so plainly refers to the birth of Christ that its meaning cannot be ignored or mistaken.

> "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isa. ix. 6.)

If these prophecies do not refer to the birth of Jesus Christ, very little meaning can be attached to them.

Critics have sought to discredit the quotation from the ninth chapter of Isaiah by asserting that the words "mighty God" are incorrectly translated and that the proper rendering is "divine Hero." Even if this change should be made, the importance of the quotation would not be greatly diminished; and, besides, the King James Version of the Bible was carefully revised a few years ago by fifty-four eminent British and American Biblical scholars, and

the revising committee made no change in the text of this scripture.

3. Even the time of the birth of the Christ is proximately fixed by prophecy, aided by subsequent history.

The time of the coming of the Christ is so plainly foreshadowed and predicted by the prophets of old as to convince any reasonable person that it was not a mere coincidence that the conditions of Jewish affairs at the time Christ is alleged to have come so fully fitted the conditions predicted for that time.

It had been predicted by the prophets that two certain conditions would take place about the time of the coming of the Messiah:

(1) The Jews were to be deprived of all temporal power and lose their identity as a nation.

(2) Sacrifices as a part of the Jewish system of worship were to be abandoned after the offering of the Messiah as a final sacrifice.

The first of these predictions was made by Jacob on his deathbed.

> "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." (Gen. xlix. 10.)

The other prediction was made by Daniel, the prophet, as follows:

> "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." (Dan. ix. 25-27.)

Josephus tells us that the Jews lost all temporal power about the time of the birth of Christ, as alleged in the record, and this statement is confirmed by all history.

Josephus tells us, further, that sacrifices ceased to be offered by the Jews when Titus conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the temple in the year 70 A.D.

Just here I desire to call attention to a very remarkable statement made by Josephus in his history of the Jews. He says that Titus ascribed the conquest of Jerusalem directly to God. When Titus entered the city as its conqueror, he made, accord-

ing to Josephus, the following remarkable statement:

> We have certainly had God for our assistant in this war, and it was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications; for what could the hands of men or any machines do toward overthrowing these towers? ("Wars of the Jews," Book VI., Chapter IX.)

The prophets of God, according to the record, predicted that as signs that the Messiah had come the Jews should be deprived of governmental power and the offering of sacrifices should cease; and according to Josephus, the great Jewish historian, the pagan conqueror who subjugated the Jews so that they no longer possessed governmental power and seized the city of Jerusalem and destroyed the temple so that sacrifices could no longer be offered, actually declared that it was the hand of God that carried out the prophecies made by the ancient prophets by bringing about the conditions predicted.

4. The prophecies are so explicit that even the place of the birth of Christ, his betrayal, and many incidents attending his trial and death are foretold.

Even the place of the birth of Christ was predicted by Micah.

> "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Ju-

> dah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Mic. v. 2.)

His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver and the purchase of the potter's field with the money were foretold by Zechariah.

> "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. . . . And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter." (Zech. xi. 12, 13.)

The lottery practiced to determine who should have his garment was foretold.

> "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." (Ps. xxii. 18.)

Even the giving of the vinegar to him to drink was predicted.

> "And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." (Ps. lxix. 21.)

The sacred record teaches us that these predictions were literally fulfilled.

> "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments,

> casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots." (Matt. xxvii. 34, 35.)

Many other prophecies relating to the Messiah, as claimed by theologians, are found in the Bible; and according to the biographers of Christ, they were all fulfilled in him.

Now, I have called as prophetic witnesses Jacob, David, Zechariah, Micah, Daniel, and Isaiah. It is customary in modern courts to call a character witness to prove the good character of a witness who has testified; and I call Josephus, the well-known Jewish historian.

Of Jacob our character witness testifies:

> So he died when he had lived full a hundred and fifty years, three only abated, having not been behind any of his ancestors in piety toward God. ("Antiquities," Book II., Chapter VIII.)

Of David our character witness testifies:

> This man was of an excellent character and was endowed with all virtues that were desirable in a king. ("Antiquities," Book VII., Chapter XV.)

Josephus testifies concerning Zechariah that he was one of the prophets and that the temple was rebuilt at Jerusalem according to the prophecies of

Haggai and Zechariah. ("Antiquities," Book XI., Chapter IV.)

As to Isaiah, we have the testimony of Josephus that this prophet had never written a falsehood.

> Now as to this prophet [Isaiah], he was by the confession of all a divine and wonderful man in speaking truth; and out of the assurance that he had never written what was false, he wrote down all his prophecies and left them behind him in books, that their accomplishment might be judged of from the events by posterity. ("Antiquities," Book X., Chapter II.)

Of Daniel our character witness testifies that he was "illustrious and famous on account of the opinion that men had that he was beloved of God"; that his books were still read at the time Josephus wrote; and that from them it was "believed that Daniel conversed with God, for he did not only prophesy of future events, as did the other prophets, but he also determined the time of their accomplishment." ("Antiquities of the Jews," Book X., Chapter XI.)

Josephus says that Daniel not only uttered prophecies like the other prophets, but that "he also determined the time of their accomplishment"; and it was Daniel who predicted that when the Messiah came he would "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."

5. The testimony of the biographers of Jesus as to the incarnation is positive and direct.

The testimony of Matthew and John as to the incarnation has the merit of being direct and to the point at least.

> "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. i. 18.)
>
> "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." (John i. 14.)

It is impossible to read these quotations and then say, with Ernest Renan, Elbert Hubbard, and others, that the disciples of Jesus were good but deluded men. When Matthew wrote that Mary was "found with child of the Holy Ghost," he either stated what he knew to be true, or solemnly proclaimed an awful fact without knowing whether it was true, or knowingly wrote the most outrageous falsehood ever uttered by a human being.

If this statement is false, then it is inconceivable and incredible that God, who proclaimed himself a jealous God, would permit a religion founded upon such a stupendous falsehood to prosper.

The Church, the greatest institution on the earth

to-day, is built upon faith in this declaration that Mary "was found with child of the Holy Ghost."

6. The allegation as to the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus is supported by circumstances attending his birth.

Many significant facts and circumstances are recorded as having happened in connection with the birth of Jesus that tend to corroborate and support the main allegation as to his birth.

It is alleged that an angel appeared unto some shepherds and announced to them the birth of "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," and the angel told them just where the Babe could be found and how they might recognize him. The singing by the heavenly choir and the recognition of Jesus by Simeon and by Anna when the Child was brought to the temple to be presented "to the Lord" by the offering of the usual sacrifice are facts which, if true, show that the coming of the Messiah was not kept a secret. Anna was a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, who made her home continuously in the temple, and she "spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." (Luke ii. 36-38.)

These allegations were written by Matthew about the year A.D. 61, and extremely old men at that

time could have remembered whether these statements were true. These things were notoriously true or notoriously false. Would Matthew have made the allegations if they had been untrue?

There is another fact alleged in the sacred record of greater importance than these. It is said that certain wise men came from the east to worship the young Child and that Herod, the king, sent for them and asked that they go and find the Child and then come and tell him. It is further alleged that the wise men, being warned of the Lord in a dream, failed to return to Herod and that in consequence the king in an effort to destroy Jesus had all the young children around Bethlehem killed.

> "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men." (Matt. ii. 16.)

This is the most awful indictment ever preferred against a human being. The slaughter of innocent children is so revolting to the mind of every person that many have refused to credit the story on ac-

count of the wantonness and unjustifiable cruelty of the act.

Other persons, and especially those who deride the Christian religion, declare that it is unreasonable that such an order should have been made by the most cruel tyrant of history; and they declare, further, that no mention is made by Josephus of this horrible murder or by any other historian, and, therefore, they refuse to believe the account as contained in the Gospel by Matthew.

The story is found only in the Gospel by Matthew, but the claim is made that it is supported by prophecy.

> "Thus saith the Lord: A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not." (Jer. xxxi. 15.)

If it be said that this reference is obscure, I call attention to the fact that Matthew expressly states that the killing of the infants under the order of Herod was a fulfillment of this prophecy by Jeremiah. (Matt. ii. 17.)

Now, if this story is not true and it is attacked on the ground of unreasonableness and on the further ground that it is not mentioned in any other

historical writing, then it goes a long way toward discrediting Matthew as one of the biographers of Christ and casts a shadow of doubt upon the whole story.

In the first place, Herod was entirely capable of committing such a crime; and the story of the atrocious murder of innocent babes, even if untrue, constitutes no slander upon the name of that wicked tyrant.

He caused his wife's brother, Aristobulus, to be drowned out of jealousy because of his popularity. He put Hyrcanus to death because he crossed the path of the tyrant's ambition. He cruelly slew his own wife, Mariamne, and strangled his own children. The very name of Herod is a synonym for cruelty, and his history consists mostly in a recital of his crimes.

The failure of Josephus and other historians of that day to mention this barbarous decree is perfectly apparent. I assign three reasons for the omission:

(1) No historian of the first century was friendly to the Christian religion, and the mention of the killing of the infants would have given prominence to the charge.

(2) Biblical scholars are generally agreed that

Matthew's Gospel was written in A.D. 61, and Josephus is generally credited as commencing his "Antiquities" immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and finishing about the year A.D. 79. The Gospel by Matthew had, therefore, been written about eighteen years when Josephus wrote his history covering the period of Herod's reign.

(3) Josephus wrote his histories at Rome, and they were intended largely for Roman readers. Possibly he considered it safer not to make such a charge against a Roman king who had been dead only a few years.

Therefore I argue that the monstrous charge made by Matthew against Herod was true and that the real reason it was not mentioned by Josephus was because he knew that extremely old men who were still alive when he wrote had personal knowledge of the truth of the horrible indictment of Herod and that any agitation of the question would result in establishing the fact beyond dispute.

Josephus rejected the Christian religion; and, therefore, very naturally he would not mention the fact that the birth of Jesus Christ was regarded as an event of such importance that Herod would commit so heinous a crime in the hope of destroying the Christ. This method of consigning to oblivion

facts desired to be forgotten by simply omitting to mention them has been used by historians since history first began to be written.

Matthew certainly expected his account of the great crime to be read. Is it reasonable to suppose that he would have made so serious a charge against a Roman king who had been dead less than thirty years if the charge had been false?

Matthew was a Jew. The Romans had completely subjugated the Jews, and Jews were frequently put to death because of the slightest infraction of Roman authority. No one but an insane person would have written such a charge if it had been untrue.

The details of the story as recited by Matthew prove that the charge is true.

Wise men of the East first started the report that so excited Herod's fears. They did not go directly to Herod at first; but they came to Jerusalem with the startling announcement that a king of the Jews had been born, that they had seen his star in the east and had come to worship him, and "all Jerusalem" was stirred by the news, and Herod heard it.

As soon as Herod heard the report he did what might naturally have been expected of a king who,

according to Josephus, was constantly tortured with the fear of being deposed. He sent for the leading Jews, all the chief priests and the scribes, because the announcement was that the new-born Child was to be king of the Jews.

"He demanded of them where *Christ* should be born," and they answered him readily: "In Bethlehem of Judea."

Now, this was a notable event referred to by Matthew, the gathering together of "ALL the chief priests and scribes."

Matthew makes the leading Jews, the chief priests and scribes, and *all* of them participate in this meeting. Why is there no denial of this meeting from them?

Matthew in his Gospel makes the direct charge against the Jews that all their chief priests and scribes were assembled at the command of the Roman king and that they were required to answer "where *Christ* should be born."

Herod sent the wise men directly to Bethlehem, the place where the chief priests and scribes said the Christ was to be born.

All the prophecies concerning Christ pointed to this time as the date of his birth, and the Jews were looking for his appearance. The natural thing for

these chief priests and scribes to have done, therefore, was to follow up this matter and see whether their expected king had arrived. Did they do so?

I argue that they did; but when they found him wrapped in swaddling clothes and in a manger, with all the evidences of kingly dignity wanting, they repudiated him. They had expected a king, but found a pauper.

The fact that neither Josephus nor any of the Jewish priests or scribes mention the killing of these infants furnishes strong corroborative proof of the truthfulness of the account by Matthew, because it is unreasonable that they would have left undenied a direct charge that the leading Jews of that day participated in a meeting and gave information to the king which was followed by the commission of so atrocious a crime, if the charge had been untrue.

Josephus, in finishing his "Antiquities," speaks of his family and promises to write something of the history of his family and of himself; and he promises to do this, as he says, "while there are still living such as can either prove what I say to be false or can attest that it is true." ("Antiquities," Book XX., Chapter XI.)

Matthew wrote an account of the birth of Jesus

Christ and of the miraculous and political events that attended his birth while there were still living persons who knew the truth or falsity of the narrative, and there is no denial of the wonderful story. Why?

7. Some objections made by critics to the doctrine of the incarnation answered.

The objection that the doctrine of the incarnation violates the laws of biology and is contrary to all human physical laws is of little value, since the birth of One who is both God and man must necessarily be different from the birth of a purely human being. It is just the same as to refuse to believe in divinity at all, because the origin of God cannot be explained according to human physical laws. The prophet had in mind just such a violation of the laws of biology when he announced that a virgin would conceive and bear a Son.

Again, it is urged by those who deny the doctrine of the incarnation that the followers of Buddha claim that he was born of a virgin; that the Brahmans of India claim that deity is incarnate in Krishna; that in Tibet it is claimed that each of the Grand Llamas is a special incarnation of deity; that it has been claimed that Zoroaster was miraculously conceived; that Romulus was the son of Mars; that

Alexander the Great had a human mother, but that his father was the god Jupiter; and that Cæsar was called the son of the goddess Venus.

Therefore these critics say that the idea of a dual nature made up of a union of the human and the divine is nothing new and that it is not peculiar to the Christian religion and was probably borrowed from Buddhism or Llamaism.

This criticism is not formidable. The writing of the first part of the book of Isaiah, embracing the chapter from which I have just quoted, is almost unanimously credited to Isaiah, and he lived between 750 and 700 B.C. Buddhism originated in the sixth century before Christ, and Llamaism sprang from Buddhism. Hence it is more plausible to say that the other religions caught the idea from Isaiah, if any borrowing was done by anybody.

But the contention of these critics that Buddhism and the other religions named teach that there was an incarnation of divinity in the founders of these religions is incorrect; because no supreme Being, God or Creator, is recognized in these systems of religion. More correctly speaking, the devotees of these false religions simply deify their founders according to their own vague notions of deity—notions so shadowy that they amount to nothing.

Again, critics say that Jesus Christ was the object of temptation and that God cannot be tempted, and therefore they say that Christ was simply a man.

Temptation is of two kinds:

(1) The presentation to one of something that creates in the mind and heart an inclination to yield and accept the thing proffered.

(2) The presentation to one of something that fails to create in the mind or heart any inclination or desire to yield and accept the thing offered.

A thing offered as a temptation may be actually repulsive, and in such case there is no real temptation.

It is in the latter sense only that Christ is represented as having been tempted. The fullest account of the temptation of Jesus is given by Matthew, as follows:

> "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a

> pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." (Matt. iv. 1-11.)

The account shows that there was not the slightest inclination on the part of Jesus to yield at any time; but, on the contrary, every approach of the devil was indignantly repulsed.

Again, the critics say that Jesus never referred to his miraculous birth. This was perfectly natural and proper. He did, however, frequently declare that he was the Son of God. He was interested only in proving his claim to divinity, and it would have looked like foolishness for him to have discussed the manner of his birth.

Another criticism is made that even the mother of Jesus referred to him as the son of Joseph.

When Jesus was twelve years of age, they took him to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the Passover; and when they started home, Jesus lingered to dispute with the doctors of the law in the temple. After they had gone a day's journey, it was discovered that he was not in the crowd, and Joseph and Mary returned to Jerusalem to look for him. They found him in the temple, and his mother said unto him:

> "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." (Luke ii. 48.)

In this connection it will be noticed that just preceding this statement it is said by Luke that "the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it." (Luke ii. 43.)

But the reply Jesus made to his mother shows that he knew that Joseph was not his father and amounts to an assertion that he was not.

> "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke ii. 49.)

Very likely Joseph and Mary treated Jesus during his childhood as the son of Joseph, and possibly

Mary did not care to excite the curiosity of those present in the temple by an explanation at that time. Jesus was the foster child of Joseph, and it was perfectly natural for Mary to speak as she did on an occasion like that.

Again, the critics say that Jesus never directly spoke of himself as the Son of God. This is simply begging the question, because language could not be plainer than that in which Christ asserted his divinity.

> "And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said." (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64.)
>
> "Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am." (Mark xiv. 61, 62.)

It is objected, again, that Jesus "increased in wisdom" (Luke ii. 52); that he suffered disappointment, as in the case of the withered fig tree (Matt. xxi. 19); and that he suffered discouragement and cried out in death: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

It is contended that God cannot increase in wisdom nor be disappointed or discouraged.

These things simply show the human in Christ. If he had not increased in wisdom, these same critics would have said that he was not a man; and it was just as necessary that he should be human as that he should be divine, in order to fulfill the requirement that there should be a union of the human and divine in him.

The visit to the fig tree was evidently for the purpose of teaching his disciples a lesson, and the incident has generally been so regarded. There was no disappointment on the part of Jesus.

If Christ had not groaned in agony on the cross, critics would have said that he was in no sense human, that divinity cannot suffer pain; and, therefore, the whole story of the vicarious suffering of Christ for the sin of the world was a myth.

Again, critics say that the disciples of Jesus considered him as a man and treated him with the familiarity of a fellow man. As against this criticism I place the positive declaration of Peter, the first announcement ever made by any disciple of an absolute faith in Christ as the Son of God.

> "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. xvi. 16.)

There is not a single incident connected with the

life of Christ showing undue familiarity between him and his disciples; but, on the contrary, the record discloses the fact that they always stood in awe of him.

The disciples were instructed by Jesus not to go about proclaiming his divinity, and he evidently preferred to let his wonderful teachings and miracles be the means of convincing the people of his true character.

> "Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." (Matt. xvi. 20.)

Again, critics call attention to the language of Peter in his famous sermon on the day of Pentecost and claim that Peter then referred to Christ as a man and attributed his miracles to God.

> "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." (Acts ii. 22.)

I reply to this criticism in three ways:

(1) Peter believed implicitly in the divinity of Jesus Christ and declared this belief on numerous occasions, both before and after the delivery of his sermon on the day of Pentecost. He even declared

that he heard the voice from heaven at the time of the transfiguration saying:

> "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (2 Pet. i. 17.)

(2) The Holy Ghost had just come to Peter, as stated in the record, and for the first time he seemed to realize the full meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity. After the day of Pentecost the apostles sometimes referred to a thing as being done by God, sometimes by Jesus Christ, and sometimes by the Holy Ghost.

For instance, in Acts xiii. 2 the Holy Ghost is represented as sending out Barnabas and Saul to their work; in Acts ix. 5 Jesus Christ brings about the conversion of Saul; and in Acts xviii. 9 God appears to Paul in prison and tells him not to fear.

So we find each person in the Trinity represented as doing a thing by or through another member of the Trinity, and in this view there is nothing in the language of Peter just quoted that is inconsistent with the claim that Jesus Christ was God.

(3) It seems that it was customary among the Jews of that day to refer to God as man. Thus Josephus, who, although he rejected the religion of Jesus Christ, had as much reverence for the God of

the Jews as any one in speaking of the beauty of the temple worship, uses this language:

For if any one do but consider the fabric of the tabernacle and take a view of the garments of the high priest and of the vessels which we make use of in our sacred ministrations, he will find that our legislator was a divine man. ("Antiquities of the Jews," Book III., Chapter VII.)

Of course agnosticism denies the doctrine of the incarnation, just as it refuses to believe everything else connected with religion. Dawson, in his "Lectures on Facts and Fancies of Modern Science," Lecture I., page 22, takes off the agnostic so admirably that I quote from his lecture as follows:

Let us ask him [the agnostic] if he can subscribe to the simple creed expressed in the words, "I am; I feel; I think." Should he deny these propositions, then there is no basis left on which to argue. Should he admit this much of belief, he has abandoned somewhat of his agnostic position; for it would be easy to show that even in uttering the pronoun "I" he has committed himself to the belief in the unknowable. What is the ego which he admits? Is it the material organism or any one of its organs or parts? Or is it something distinct, of which the organism is merely the garment or outward manifestation? Or is the organism itself anything more than a bundle of appearances partially known and scarcely understood by that which calls itself "I"? Who knows? And if our own personality is thus inscrutable, if we can conceive of it neither as identical with the whole or any part of the organism nor as existing independently of the organism, we should begin

our agnosticism here and decline to utter the pronoun "I" as implying what we cannot know.

8. The evidence in support of the doctrine of the incarnation is of a credible character; and since there is no substantive testimony to the contrary, it ought to be believed.

Under the rule that the burden of proof rests upon the party who asserts the affirmative of an issue, it is incumbent upon Christianity to prove the doctrine of the incarnation by a preponderance of the evidence. Has it done so?

This necessitates an inquiry into the character, as well as the credibility, of the evidence.

In the first place, I observe that the evidence in favor of the affirmative of the issue is of a positive nature, and positive testimony is of more value than that which is purely negative.

Indeed, those who deny the doctrine of the incarnation furnish no evidence upon the question whatsoever. They simply criticize the evidence offered to sustain the affirmative of the issue, but do not even contradict it.

Now, a jury may refuse to believe uncontradicted evidence if it fails to produce in the minds of the jurors a belief in its truth. However, to justify a jury in refusing to give credence to uncontradicted

testimony there ought to be something to impeach it, something that really renders it incredible and not mere criticism. The opponents of the doctrine base their rejection of it largely on the ground that the evidence to sustain it is incredible because it is unreasonable, and they say it is unreasonable because the idea that a virgin should be the mother of a child in the manner asserted in the Bible is contrary to all the laws of biology. They seem to overlook the fact that the very issue involves the question of the violation of all human physical laws. Those who favor the doctrine declare that there was a violation of those physical laws; and the question is not whether a reasonable thing was done, but whether an unreasonable and unnatural event happened.

To sum up the matter, the case seems to stand about this way: In favor of the affirmative of the issue as to the doctrine of the incarnation, we have the prophetic declarations, more or less direct and positive, of several witnesses who are recognized as having been good men and prophets of God; the testimony of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which is direct and positive, corroborated by Josephus and Tacitus, as to the presence on earth of a person called Jesus Christ, and corroborated also by

wonderful teachings that bear the impress of divine inspiration and that are attributed to Jesus Christ, and also by the story of his miracles and resurrection.

The doctrine is supported, therefore, by a clear preponderance of the evidence, and merits the belief of mankind.

CHAPTER III

Sacrifices

1. The abandonment of sacrifices by the Jews so soon after Jesus Christ finished his earthly career, as set forth in the record, furnishes strong corroborative evidence of the fact that Christ came, as alleged, and that he was the Messiah.

In all controversies the burden of proof rests upon the one who seeks to maintain the affirmative of the issue. He must go forward with his evidence at least to the extent of making out a *prima facie* case. By a *prima facie* case is meant such a state of proved or admitted facts as will, nothing else appearing, entitle the one bearing the burden of proof to a verdict in his favor.

The question as to which party has the affirmative of the issue, and, therefore, the burden of proof, is settled in legal procedure in this way.

Suppose neither party should offer any evidence. Which one would be entitled to a verdict or judgment in his favor?

Tested by these rules, it is clearly seen that those who maintain that Jesus Christ was a divine Being

have resting upon them the burden of proof. Have they met that burden?

One way in which they claim to have done so is by producing evidence that sacrifices were once offered by God's people, the Jews; and then they say that it was predicted that these sacrifices should cease when Christ came and that they did cease about two thousand years ago and in consequence of the fact that Jesus Christ gave his life as a final sacrifice.

On approaching a discussion of the question as to whether sacrifices ceased to be offered on account of the fact that Jesus Christ died as a final sacrifice for sin, it is important to review the field and see how much of the question is conclusively proved or admitted. In the first place, I assume that the following facts are so conclusively shown by history that they will not be seriously disputed.

(1) That the Jews practiced a system of worship by offering sacrifices.

Josephus, the great Jewish historian, tells us that when Cestius issued an order to count the lambs sacrificed at one feast of the Passover it was ascertained that the number was two hundred and fifty-six thousand.

While there is no proof that Jesus ever actually

engaged in sacrificial worship, it would not have been inconsistent for him to have done so prior to his crucifixion—that is, prior to the time when his friends claim that he was offered as a final sacrifice. We know that he gave countenance to the practice, if we are to believe the record. He seems to have assumed that his hearers offered sacrifices and to have commended the custom, provided the gift was offered in a spirit of brotherly love.

> "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 23, 24.)

He commanded the leper whom he healed to go and offer his gift according to the law of Moses in the case of lepers.

> "And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." (Matt. viii. 4.)

(2) That this system of worship through sacrifices was abandoned by the Jews.

(3) That the Jews ceased to offer sacrifices about two thousand years ago. The exact date was the

year A.D. 70, when the temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus.

(4) That sacrifices continued to be offered by all pagan nations long after such a system of worship was abandoned by the Jews.

2. The system of worship through sacrifices was prescribed for the Jews by God himself.

There is one other important fact that I assume will be admitted by all who believe in Deity, and that is that the system of worship through sacrifices as practiced by the Jews was prescribed by God.

The most minute details as to the structure of the tabernacle and the altars are given in Exodus, Leviticus, and other books of the Old Testament; and the system of worship is minutely prescribed; and all these directions are preceded by the declaration that God spoke them to Moses.

Josephus declares that this system of worship was so beautiful and grand in its appointments that it proclaimed God as its Author:

> Now, here one may wonder at the ill will which men bear to us and which they profess to be on account of our despising that Deity which they pretend to honor; for if any one do but consider the fabric of the tabernacle and take a view of the garments of the high priests and of the vessels which we make use of in our sacred ministration, he will find that our legis-

lator was a divine Man. ("Antiquities of the Jews," Book III., Chapter VII.)

3. Man first inaugurated sacrificial worship, and God condescended to adopt the system.

It appears from the record (and I speak of the Bible as the record) that the ancient system of worshiping God through sacrifices was not designed by that divine Legislator of whom Josephus speaks at the time when man was first created, but that this method of worship was first voluntarily practiced by man, without any direction from any one, and that the system of which Josephus speaks was not prescribed and enjoined until many centuries after men first voluntarily offered sacrifices. This may or may not be true, but it is correct so far as the record discloses.

Cain was the first worshiper of Divinity, so far as the record shows, and he inaugurated the worship of God by offering a sacrifice.

What prompted him to do this is not disclosed; but the offer must have had in it some element of love, and Cain must have been actuated by both the desire and the expectation of securing by his sacrifice the approbation of God, because the same record teaches us that afterwards, when he discovered in some undisclosed way that God preferred

Abel and his sacrifice, he slew Abel out of jealousy of his brother simply because God loved Abel better than he loved him, the only crime in all the bloody annals of crime ever committed from such a motive.

This system of worship through sacrifices received the sanction of God and was finally prescribed by the laws of Moses and religiously observed by the Israelites for ages.

A sacrifice is an attempt on the part of man to reach God. An accepted sacrifice expresses the condescension of God toward man. The ancient Jew had the express promise that God would meet him at the altar and that his offer would be accepted. (Ex. xxix. 42, 43.)

4. The origin of the Passover, as well as the system of worship through sacrifices, typified and foretold the offering of Christ as a final sacrifice.

Without entering into a general discussion of the law or meaning of sacrifices, it is sufficient for present purposes to say that the Bible clearly teaches two things concerning them.

(1) That sacrifices were largely symbolic in character and typical of the vicarious suffering and death of Christ, the Messiah, for the sins of the world.

(2) That when Christ, the Messiah, should come

he would be offered as a final sacrifice for sin, and that after his death all further worship of God through sacrifices would cease.

The worship of God through sacrifices did cease nearly two thousand years ago. Why?

Christianity says that this system of worship ceased because Christ, the promised Messiah, came and was offered as the final and last sacrifice about the time sacrifices were abandoned by the Jews, and that the fact that this part of the worship of God, so forcibly enjoined by the laws of Moses, was given up by a devout people is the strongest evidence imaginable that Christ did come at that time.

On the other hand, critics say that the Jews ceased to perform the service because Titus, the Roman Emperor, captured Jerusalem in the year 70 and utterly destroyed the temple and its worship.

Titus did destroy the temple and reduced the Jews to such extreme poverty that it was impossible for them to provide the sacrifices.

However, this answer to the broad challenge of Christianity is not sufficient, since history teaches that the temple had been destroyed and its worship interrupted before; but always, prior to the time the last great sacrifice in the person of Christ was offered, when sacrifices were to cease according to

the teachings of Jewish prophets, the worship of God through sacrifices was restored and continued by the Jews, sometimes after the most heroic struggles.

The great Jewish historian Josephus tells us that Antiochus IV., King of Syria, known in history as Epiphanes the Illustrious or as Epimanes, conquered Jerusalem in 169 B.C. and plundered the city and the temple. He prohibited the Jewish religion, tore up and burned the sacred Scriptures, abolished the daily sacrifice of expiation, and dedicated the temple to Zeus Olympius. But the time ordained of God when these typical sacrifices were to cease had not come. The great and final sacrifice had not been made, and so the Jews arose and fought with desperate courage until the temple worship was restored after three and a half years.

A strange fatality seems to have attended the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple and its worship, a matter that can be explained only on the theory that God had ordained that sacrifices should cease when Christ should be offered as a fulfillment of the object and meaning of sacrifices.

Josephus tells us that when Titus descended upon the city of Jerusalem with an army of eighty thou-

sand men he found the city filled with a million persons keeping the feast of the Passover without any provision having been made for their sustenance. The Jews were divided into three hostile factions that hated each other and stood ready to fight each other with more zeal than they could muster in a joint conflict with the Romans. Eleazer at the head of one faction, with two thousand four hundred men, held the temple and four towers that had been erected at its corners. John of Gischala, who seems to have been the leader of a mediating party of six thousand men, held the position of Ananus in the temple courts and the lower city and besieged Eleazer's forces. Simon, the son of Gioras, occupied the hill of Zion with ten thousand Jews and five thousand Idumeans and confronted both the other leaders. These factions carried on an incessant fight with one another, leaving the task of Titus all the lighter. When the investment of the city became complete, it was no longer possible to furnish the offerings for the daily sacrifices twice a day for the sins of the people; and hence sacrifices ceased, never to be resumed.

It is said that Titus himself begged the Jews, who finally took refuge in the temple, to come out into the open and not force him to destroy that

magnificent edifice; but the deluded Jews, in their wild fanaticism, believing that God would interfere and save the temple by a miracle, refused to accept the offer and forced Titus to utterly destroy the building.

Thus was fulfilled the prediction of Christ, who, when his disciples called his attention to the beauty of the temple, said: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Matt. xxiv. 2.)

Daniel, the great Hebrew prophet, six hundred and six years before, had prophesied of the coming of "the Messiah, the Prince" and then made this wonderful prediction:

> "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." (Dan. ix. 26, 27.)

Whiston, the translator and editor of Josephus, says in a note:

> This was a remarkable day, indeed, and 17th of Paneus (Tamuz), A.D. 70, when, according to Daniel's prediction, six hundred and six years before, the Romans, in half a week, caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease (Dan. ix. 27). For from the month of February, A.D. 66, about which time Vespasian entered on this war, to this very time, was just three years and a half.

Why, then, did the Jews suffer the sacrifice and the oblation to cease? Why do they not revive the practice now?

There is but one answer: The Christ, the Son of God, came in the fullness of time as predicted by the prophets of old; and since that time the Jews have refrained from offering sacrifices because God in some way has caused them to feel and know that sacrifices are no longer acceptable to him, just as Cain in some undisclosed way was made to feel and know that his sacrifice was rejected.

It is true that the Jews were dispersed and scattered over the face of the earth after the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, but for centuries they have been congregated in vast numbers in various countries. There are millions of them in New York, London, Paris, and other large cities of the world.

They possess vast wealth; and some of them, like the Rothschilds, count their gold in fabulous sums. They still have their synagogues and their priests and rabbis, as of old.

The Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of all the States in the Union guarantee to them the right to worship God to-day by sacrifices and burnt offerings, as prescribed in the laws of Moses. England, France, Germany, and all of the great civilized nations of the earth give them the same privilege. Freedom of conscience and the privilege of worshiping God in any manner they may choose is their inalienable right.

They still say that the Messiah has not come. If they really believe this, then their duty to offer sacrifices for sin is just as binding upon them to-day as when Aaron and his sons kindled the fire upon the altar and received the offerings at the door of the tabernacle. There is nothing in the law of Moses nor in the teachings of the prophets that excuses the Jews from this service except the sacrifice of the divine Messiah as the final propitiation for all sin.

Jacob on his deathbed predicted that the Messiah would come, when the Jews should lose their power as a nation.

> "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." (Gen. xlix. 10.)

Josephus tells us that the Jews, through the conquest of the Romans, lost all temporal power, and that even the Sanhedrin ceased to exist about the time that Christianity says Christ came.

Thus the Jews themselves, by their writings and by their action in ceasing to offer sacrifices, furnish abundant testimony that the One whom they crucified two thousand years ago was indeed the Christ, the Messiah.

In this connection it is very significant that the observance of the feast of the Passover was abandoned at the same time sacrifices ceased. The Passover could be observed only at the house of the Lord.

> "Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee: but at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover." (Deut. xvi. 5, 6.)

The paschal meal, at present observed among the Jews, partakes of the nature of a hallowed family feast; but the Passover according to the law of Moses has been abandoned.

The Passover has always been regarded as typical of the sacrifice of Christ. The lamb sacrificed had to be without blemish, and the perfection of the paschal lamb was typical of the perfection of the great sacrifice. No bone of the paschal lamb could be broken.

> "They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it." (Num. ix. 12.)

No bone of Christ's body was broken, although the legs of both of those crucified with him were broken. (John xix. 31-33.)

The crucifixion of Christ occurred at the very time the feast of the Passover was being observed, and the city of Jerusalem was full of people celebrating the Passover when sacrifices ceased at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

The final sacrifice in the person of the Son of God, the last sacrifice acceptable unto God, and the day when Titus caused "the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," as predicted by the prophet Daniel, both occurred during a celebration of the feast of the Passover, a feast remarkably typical of Christ, and sacrifices and the Passover were abandoned at the same time.

The idea that Jesus Christ was offered as the last and final sacrifice is clearly taught in the New Testament as well as in the Old.

In the eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters of Hebrews we have a very clear exposition of this doctrine; and St. Paul, after explaining at length that Jesus Christ was not like the sacrifices that had to be offered every year by the high priest, declares that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" and that he "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." He then expressly declares that the old system of worshiping God through sacrifices was abolished by the final offering of Jesus Christ.

> "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb. x. 9, 10.)

God still enjoins upon men the duty of worshiping him, and he still puts it into the hearts of men to do his will as in the days of old, and men still do his will as of old, sometimes unwillingly and unwittingly.

He declared through his prophets that it was his will that sacrifices should cease after the offering of the Messiah; and the Jews, possibly realizing in

some mysterious way, like Cain as to his sacrifice, that their sacrifices were no longer acceptable to God after that event, have since silently observed the will of God in this respect, perhaps unwillingly and unwittingly.

The abandonment of sacrifices by those bound to observe them under the law given directly by God to their great leader and at a time when the observance of such a rite was to cease, according to all the prophecies and signs of the times, furnishes a powerful argument in support of the contention that the Messiah was slain as a final sacrifice at the time claimed by Christianity and that he was the Christ, the Son of God, a divine Being.

CHAPTER IV

The Testimony of John the Baptist

1. The story of the birth, life, and death of the famous precursor, John the Baptist, as set out in the record furnishes abundant testimony in corroboration of the history of Jesus Christ.

The parents of John the Baptist were good people, but they lived to be old before the birth of their famous son.

> "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years." (Luke i. 6, 7.)

His father, Zacharias, was a priest of the temple; and, "according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord." (Luke i. 9.)

One day while Zacharias was performing the functions of his office within the holy place, a multitude of the people being without, an angel appeared to him and announced the startling news to Zacharias that a son should be born to him and his aged

wife, that the name of that son should be John, and that his mission should be "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke i. 17.)

The extreme age of the priest and his wife made the news seem incredible to Zacharias, and he doubted the words of the angel and asked: "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years." (Luke i. 18.)

Because of this unbelief on the part of Zacharias he was stricken dumb by the angel and remained so until the day the child was circumcised, when a name was to be given to him.

> "And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless." (Luke i. 21, 22.)

On the eighth day after the birth of the child the neighbors came in to rejoice with the parents and to circumcise and name the child. These neighbors wanted to name him Zacharias, after his father; but his mother demurred and said he should be called John. The neighbors were a little persistent and called attention to the fact that none of the family were called John. Thereupon they appealed

to Zacharias, who called for a writing table and wrote, saying: "His name is John."

Immediately after this speech returned to Zacharias, and he prophesied in the presence of the people assembled and said:

> "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." (Luke i. 76.)

Now, these were wonderful events that had taken place, according to the record, and the manner of their performance was well calculated to excite great wonder among the people and to cause much comment.

The priest who entered within the sanctuary was the legal representative of the people; and for a calamity to befall him while burning incense on the sacred altar indicated that God had rejected the offering, and thus the whole people were affected thereby.

Here, then, as alleged in the record, was a priest who held the very important office of incense burner in the temple, who was well known to the people as a man who could talk, who entered within the veil of the sanctuary to perform the duties of his office and tarried there until the waiting multitude

became alarmed at his delay, and who emerged from within the veil speechless.

Did this happen? Luke says it did; and he boldly wrote the wonderful story during his own life, of course, and therefore within the lifetime of some, at least, of the multitude who waited for Zacharias to come out from within the veil and who were overwhelmed with consternation when he came out speechless. Who denies the story?

Would Luke have written such an account if it had been untrue? Would there not be a denial of the story if it were false?

It is alleged that this remarkable event happened in the temple at Jerusalem, the most conspicuous place in all the world in that day, and that a multitude of people were eyewitnesses to a part of it at least. Is it not strange that no one has ever denied this story?

The dumb-stricken priest remained speechless for some months; and a child was born to him and his aged wife, and then his speech was restored in the presence of his neighbors.

Why is there no denial of this from some of the neighbors? Is it because these things never happened? Why would Luke have invented such a story if it were untrue? If it were false, the record

furnished a fine opportunity to the enemies of Christianity to discredit Luke as one of the biographers of Jesus Christ and thus to cast doubt upon the whole story as to Christ.

Upon the restoration of his speech it is said that Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost and that he prophesied and declared for his son the very mission predicted for him by Isaiah and Malachi centuries before his birth. He declared to his neighbors that the child should "go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways."

The record states that John the Baptist, after he became a man, baptized the people "for the remission of sins."

Now, the Jews had their ceremonial ablutions for what they regarded as uncleanness, but baptism as a religious rite and for the remission of sin was unknown to them.

Here, then, was a new religious rite practiced by the son of a priest, whose clothing was camel's hair and a leather girdle, and whose food was locusts and wild honey. The new ceremony became wonderfully popular, and the Jews came to be baptized in immense numbers.

> "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about

> Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matt. iii. 5, 6.)

Is it true that John baptized in the river as here stated and to the extent declared? If not, why is it that the Jews, at least, did not immediately deny the story? It is declared that "Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan" were baptized by John "in Jordan."

The existence of John the Baptist as a historical character, the story of his baptism, the fact that such great crowds came to him, and the story of his imprisonment and death at the hands of Herod are fully shown by Josephus, the great Jewish historian.

> Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment for what he did against John, that was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue both as to righteousness toward one another and piety toward God and so to come to baptism, for that the washing with water would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away of some sins only, but for the purification of the body, supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now, when many others came in crowds about him, for they were greatly moved by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the

people might put it in his power and inclination to raise rebellion (for they seemed to do anything he should advise), thought it best by putting him to death to prevent any mischief he might cause and not bring himself into difficulties by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly, he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now, the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod and a mark of God's displeasure against him. ("Antiquities of the Jews," Book XVIII., Chapter V.)

The mission of John the Baptist as the precursor of Jesus Christ was plainly predicted.

> "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. iii. 1.)

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all three, declare that this prophecy was fulfilled in John the Baptist. (Matt. xi. 10; Mark i. 2; Luke i. 76.)

No mention is made by Josephus of the birth of John the Baptist, but he recognizes John as one of the historical characters among the Jews of that day. I assign two reasons for this omission:

(1) Josephus was writing the political history of

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the Jews, and the mention of John at all was only incidental.

(2) Josephus rejected the Christian religion, which had made wonderful progress by the time Josephus wrote his "Antiquities," as shown by Tacitus, and he could not have been ignorant of the new doctrine; but since he was writing a history of the Jews and not a history of religion, he very naturally would not have mentioned any facts, however well authenticated, that tended to establish a religion that he repudiated.

It will be noticed that Josephus assigns a different reason for the killing of John the Baptist by Herod from that given by Luke and the other apostles. Josephus assigns a political reason why Herod put John out of the way, but the apostles ascribe this crime of Herod to domestic sins in the family of the tyrant. But there is no real contradiction here. Very likely both reasons existed; and Josephus, writing a political history, very naturally assigned the political reason for taking the life of John, while the apostles, being concerned only with religious matters, just as naturally gave the other reason.

Josephus, however, relates the facts showing the unlawful marriage of Herod and Herodias, just

as stated by the apostles. ("Antiquities," Book XVIII., Chapter V., 4.) Philip, the husband of Herodias, was still living at the time of the marriage of Herod and Herodias, as was also the legitimate wife of Herod. It was, therefore, perfectly natural for John the Baptist, who, according to Josephus, "was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue," to say unto Herod: "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." (Mark vi. 18.)

Josephus fully corroborated the Biblical narrative in saying that John the Baptist was a real historical character, that he was a good man, that he exercised a wonderful influence over the people, and that he actually baptized.

Did he baptize Jesus Christ? Matthew, Mark, and Luke all give an account of the baptism of Jesus Christ, and each one declares that there was a voice from heaven at the time saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii. 17; Mark i. 11; Luke iii. 22.)

If it could be proved that a voice came from heaven declaring that Jesus was the Son of God, the question of the divinity of Jesus would be conclusively settled; but the evidence to support this statement depends entirely on the records quoted

and such circumstantial testimony as may be found to corroborate the record.

The record states that the Spirit of God in the shape of a dove descended upon Jesus at the time of his baptism, but it is not claimed that this could have been seen by the crowd present. Rather the contrary may be inferred, and it would seem that the apostles specially meant to say that this manifestation of the alleged recognition of Jesus as the Son of God was not seen by others.

> "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." (Matt. iii. 16.)
>
> "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him." (Mark i. 9, 10.)

The account by Matthew (chapter iii.) shows that John was talking to the multitude when Christ came to be baptized. The evident care taken to show that the multitude did not witness the Spirit in the form of a dove very clearly implies that the

apostles meant to say that those present did hear the voice.

Another thing calculated to call the special attention of the multitude to Jesus happened just preceding his baptism. When Christ first came to be baptized, John forbade him, saying: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him." (Matt. iii. 14, 15.)

This conversation, according to the record, occurred in the presence of the crowd. Is it not likely that those present were astonished at this strange conversation? All the people were flocking to John for baptism; and, according to Josephus, he had a wonderful influence over them. But One came whom John at first refused to baptize, and then consented upon the strange statement of the Applicant for baptism that "it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

Another very important thing is alleged to have happened at the time of Christ's baptism by John. It seems that John, who had spent the greater part of his life in the wilderness, did not know Jesus until he came to be baptized. John had told the people that he baptized with water unto repentance, but

that One was coming who would baptize "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." So when John saw Jesus coming he called the attention of the crowd to his former declaration and exclaimed:

> "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. . . . And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." (John i. 29-34.)

Here we have a very remarkable declaration. It is alleged that John the Baptist, who, according to Josephus, the great Jewish historian, was a good man and who baptized the people for the remission of sin, declared to the crowd, when he saw Jesus coming to be baptized, that he was the Lamb of God and the Son of God.

Is it not strange that there is no denial of these remarkable statements from any source? It is true they are criticized and doubted and denied now; but they were written within the first century. They relate to the most important events that ever

occurred in the history of the human race, and they are alleged to have happened openly and in the presence of multitudes of people, including the leaders among the Jews. The writer of that record was a grown man when these things are alleged to have taken place, because he was chosen one of Christ's disciples immediately afterwards. Such strange events, if they ever occurred, undoubtedly excited comment throughout the country; and if they did not occur, then it is strange that there is no denial of such important allegations.

Again, John the Baptist was a well-known and popular man, as shown by history outside the Bible; and his baptism of Christ, the voice from heaven, and John's proclamation that Christ was the Son of God are allegations of facts that were either true or notoriously false.

Is it reasonable that Matthew, Luke, and John, writing a history of Christ within thirty-five years after the events are alleged to have taken place and within the memory of living persons who must have been witnesses as to the truth or falsity of the allegations, would have risked their own reputation for veracity if these allegations had not been true?

It was not necessary to the structure of the history they were writing that these details as to what

is alleged to have happened at the baptism of Christ should have been set forth; but these biographers of Christ were bound to have known that an exposure of the falsity of such averments, if they were false, would tumble the entire fabric to the ground.

It is unreasonable to suppose that they would have invented any such story.

Finally, these same persons, after John's death, testified that John had told them the truth about Jesus when he said that Jesus was the Son of God. When the Jews sought to take Christ and put him to death because he told them plainly that he was the Son of God, he went over "beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized."

> "And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true." (John x. 41.)

CHAPTER V

Persecution

1. The persecution of those who knew and believed in Jesus Christ during his existence on earth and of those who suffered death immediately after his ascension into heaven furnishes the strongest possible evidence of the fact that he was divine and that they recognized him as such.

It is both unnatural and unreasonable that men and women would suffer persecution and death for clinging to a false faith when their own personal knowledge told them whether their faith was well founded.

If we credit the record, the disciples of Jesus Christ were specially warned by him that they would suffer persecution and even death on his account.

> "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." (John xv. 20.)
>
> "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." (John xvi. 2.)

Those who suffered persecution during the first century and were old enough to know for themselves whether the earth quaked and darkness covered the face of the earth for three hours at the time Christianity says that Christ was crucified must have endured their sufferings on account of their own personal convictions as to the truth of the claims of Christianity. In other words, if Christ actually lived and performed the wonderful miracles attributed to him, if he had the authority to delegate to others the power to work miracles, and did actually give this power to his disciples—something it is impossible for men to do and no one but God can do—and if his birth, baptism, and death were attended by the miraculous manifestations of his divinity claimed by his friends, then these early martyrs knew these things and had a reason for the faith that sustained them in their sufferings. If these things did not occur in connection with the life and death of the Christ, then they were either bound to know personally of the falsity of their faith, or they could have discovered the truth by proper inquiries, which any reasonable person would have made before submitting to persecution.

The first to suffer death was the precursor of Christ, John the Baptist. The death of John the

Baptist at the hands of Herod is fully confirmed by Josephus, the great Jewish historian.

Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John that was called the Baptist, for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue both as to righteousness toward one another and piety toward God and so to come to baptism. ("Antiquities," Book XVIII., Chapter V.)

The first of the disciples of Jesus to suffer death was James, the brother of John.

> "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword." (Acts xii. 1, 2.)

The persecution of the disciples and of the early Christians as detailed in the book of the Acts of the Apostles is fully corroborated by the secular histories of that period.

Tacitus, in his famous "Annals," writing of the persecution of the Christians under Nero in A.D. 64 and of the report that Nero had set fire to the city of Rome, says:

Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the

extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate; and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out, not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful, from all parts of the world, find their central and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then upon their information an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burned, to serve as a mighty illumination when daylight had expired. Nero offered his garden for the spectacle and was exhibiting a show in the circus while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not as it seemed for the public good, but to the glut of one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed.

Thus we learn from Tacitus, who is generally regarded as one of the greatest and most reliable of pagan historians, writing about the year 88 of the persecution of the Christians in the year 64 under Nero, that the outrages committed against the followers of the Nazarene had grown with such violence since Peter and John were first cast into prison, thirty years before, that sport was made over the spectacle of an "immense multitude" being torn by

dogs and burned to death to please a wicked ruler and that "mockery of every sort was added to their deaths."

This shocking persecution of the Christians occurred only about thirty years after "Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate."

Could any evidence show more conclusively the authenticity of the New Testament Scriptures than this historical statement of Tacitus that Christ had been crucified under Pilate at the very time claimed by the four biographers of Jesus Christ? This testimony of Tacitus also shows that "an immense multitude" had become so convinced of the divinity of Jesus Christ that they preferred death in the most cruel form rather than give up their faith in him.

Let it not be forgotten that this horrible persecution of the Christians, conclusively attested by profane history, took place in the lifetime of persons who, according to the record, must have been witnesses of the darkness that attended the death of Jesus Christ and must have felt the earthquake that occurred at that time.

Infidelity tells us that such a person as Jesus

Christ never lived; or, if he did, that he was simply a man and did not perform the wonderful works attributed to him and that nature did not attest his death by darkness and a great earthquake. If not, then why did persons who were bound to know whether these things were true suffer the agonies of mockery, torture, and death rather than give up their belief in Christ?

Why did they have any faith at all in Christ? There were thousands of persons living at the time of the persecution under Nero who were full grown at the time Christ suffered "the extreme penalty" under Pilate, as related by Tacitus as well as in the Scriptures.

Is it possible that an "immense multitude" would have suffered themselves to be clothed in the skins of beasts and torn to pieces by dogs while blindly pursuing a false faith when they, if they did not have personal knowledge, could have ascertained the truth so easily by simply going to Jerusalem and making inquiry of persons who did have personal knowledge and actually did know whether such a person as Jesus Christ had lived and died in such a manner as to proclaim him the Son of God?

Communication at that time between Jerusalem and Rome by the Mediterranean Sea was as swift

and easy as between New York and Liverpool during the war of the American Revolution.

The sacred writers tell us that "there was a darkness over all the earth" for the space of three hours when Christ died. (Luke xxiii. 44.)

These Christians at Rome who were alive thirty years before the time of the persecution by Nero were bound to have observed this darkness; and as it lasted too long for an eclipse of the sun, they naturally would have inquired as to the cause. If they did, there were thousands of witnesses throughout Judea who could have furnished the desired information. Possibly they might have asked some of the Roman soldiers who attended the crucifixion.

The Roman centurion and the company of Roman soldiers with him who watched the crucifixion of Christ became convinced by the darkness and the earthquake that Jesus was the Son of God.

> "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God." (Matt. xxvii. 54.)

Josephus, the great Jewish historian, in his "Antiquities of the Jews," Book XX., Chapter IX.,

gives a very interesting account of the martyrdom of James the Less, the brother of Jesus Christ and one of the twelve disciples. The following is the account by Josephus:

And now Cæsar, upon hearing of the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judea as procurator. But the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also himself called Ananus. Now, the report goes that this elder Ananus proved a most fortunate man; for he had five sons, who had all performed the office of a high priest to God, and he had himself enjoyed that dignity, formerly a long time, which had never happened to any other of our high priests. But the younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper and very insolent. He was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders above the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed. Therefore when Ananus was of this disposition he thought he had now a proper opportunity to exercise his authority. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road. So he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others. And when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned. But as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done. They also sent to the king, desiring him to send to Ananus, that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified.

The statement that Ananus, the high priest, was a Sadducee explains to some extent why he was so bitter against James and the others who were stoned with him. The early Christians, and especially the apostles, were very insistent in teaching the doctrine of the resurrection; and the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection.

Here, then, was James, the son of Mary, the mother of Christ, publicly stoned to death by order of the Sanhedrin that, according to the record, a few years before had crucified the Christ.

Did not James know whether Jesus was divine? Doubtless he had heard from the lips of his own mother the story of the appearance of the angel to her and of the declaration of the angel to her that the "holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." According to the record, he had seen this same Christ cause the fig tree to wither, the raging sea to be calm, the fierce winds to be still, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the lepers to be cleansed, the demoniacs to be quieted, the dead to rise, and had also seen the darkness and felt the earthquake at the death of that Christ. No wonder he could suffer martyrdom!

Observe that Josephus says that James was not

slain alone, but that others were stoned with him. His language is:

> So he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others. And when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned.

It is significant also that Josephus speaks of James as the brother of Jesus, thus implying that Jesus was the better known of the two.

The law that James and the others had broken was the preaching of Christ against the commands of the Sanhedrin. In the third and fourth chapters of Acts we have the story of the healing of a lame man by Peter and John at the gate of the temple and of their imprisonment and trial on the next day before this same Sanhedrin, the "rulers, and elders, and scribes."

> "And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." (Acts iv. 18.)

It is a significant fact that the names of Christ and his disciples are mentioned by pagan historians who wrote within the first century only in connection with the persecution of the Christians.

This, however, was a very natural thing for

them to do. Tacitus and Josephus, writing, as they both did, during the early period of the history of Christianity, and both being bitterly opposed to the religion of Jesus Christ, very naturally hoped and expected that widespread and unrelenting persecution of the Christians would result in their complete extermination in a short time.

The persecution of the Christians soon after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, as set out in the record, is not evidence of a positive nature; but the fact that so many persons suffered martyrdom within the span of a human life after the alleged death of Christ is a powerful circumstance tending to show the truth of that which is alleged of Christ.

Appellate courts of the highest character and authority have held that circumstantial evidence is not only a recognized and accepted instrumentality in the ascertainment of truth, but that it is the safest kind of evidence. Witnesses may be bribed or otherwise interested in various ways, but legitimate inferences drawn from proved or admitted facts and circumstances speak in trumpet tones and almost invariably produce an abiding conviction of the truth of that they purport to show.

Thus the accounts that pagan authors give of the persecution of the Christians furnish strong circum-

stantial evidence in corroboration of the record and history of Jesus Christ contained in the four Gospels.

When they speak of the persecution of Christians, the question naturally arises as to where they obtained the name. Christianity alone answers the question.

> "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts xi. 26.)

Pliny the Younger, Proconsul of Bithynia, born in the year A.D. 61, in his famous letter to Trajan, the Roman Emperor, mentions Christ three times, showing that he knew who Christ was and whence the name Christian was derived. The letter is as follows:

Sir: It is my constant method to apply myself to you for the resolution of all my doubts, for who can better govern my dilatory way of proceeding or instruct my ignorance? I have never been present at the examination of the Christians, on which account I am unacquainted with what uses to be inquired into and what and how far they are to be punished; nor are my doubts small, whether there be not a distinction to be made between the ages, and whether tender youth ought to have the same punishment with strong men; whether there be not room for pardon upon repentance or whether it may not be an advantage to one that had been a Christian that he hath forsaken Christianity; whether the bare name, without any crime besides or the crime adhering to that name,

is to be punished. In the meantime I have taken this course about those who have been brought before me as Christians: I asked them whether they were Christians or not. If they confessed that they were Christians, I asked them again, and a third time, intermixing threatenings with the questions. If they persevered in their confession, I ordered them to be executed; for I did not doubt but, let their confessions be of any sort whatsoever, this positiveness and inflexible obstinacy deserved to be punished. There have been some of this mad sect whom I took notice of in particular as Roman citizens, that they might be sent to that city. After some time, as is usual in such examinations, the crime spread itself, and many more cases came before me. A libel was sent to me, though without an author, containing many names. These denied that they were Christians now or ever had been. They called upon the gods and supplicated to your image, which I caused to be brought to me for that purpose, with frankincense and wine. They also cursed Christ. None of which things, as it is said, can any of those that are really Christians be compelled to do; so I thought fit to let them go. Others of them that were named in the libel said they were Christians, but presently denied it again, that indeed they had been Christians, but had ceased to be so, some three years, some many more; and one there was that said he had not been so these twenty years. All these worshiped your image and the images of your gods; these also cursed Christ. However, they assured me that the main of their fault, or of their mistake, was this, that they were wont, on a stated day, to meet together before it was light and to sing a hymn to Christ, as to a god alternately, and to oblige themselves by a sacrament not to do anything that was ill, but that they would commit no theft or pilfering or adultery; that they would not break their promises or deny

what was deposited with them when it was required back again. After which it was their custom to depart and to meet again at a common but innocent meal, which they had left off upon that edict which I published at your command, and wherein I had forbidden any such conventicles. These examinations made me think it necessary to inquire by torments what the truth was, which I did of two servant maids who were called deaconesses; but still I discovered no more than that they were addicted to a bad and to an extravagant superstition. Hereupon I have put off any further examinations and have recourse to you, for the affair seems to be well worth consultation, especially on account of the number of those that are in danger; for there are many of every age, of every rank, and of both sexes, who are now and hereafter likely to be called to account and to be in danger, for this superstition is spread like a contagion, not only in cities and towns, but into country villages also, which yet there is reason to hope may be stopped and corrected. To be sure, the temples, which were almost forsaken, begin already to be frequented, and the holy solemnities which were long intermitted begin to be revived. The sacrifices begin to sell well everywhere, of which very few purchasers had of late appeared. Whereby it is easy to suppose how great a multitude of men might be amended if place for repentance be admitted.

The following is Trajan's reply to the foregoing interesting epistle:

My Pliny: You have taken the right method which you ought in examining the causes of those who have been accused as Christians, for, indeed, no certain and general form of judging can be ordained in the case. These people are not to be sought for; but if they be accused and convicted, they

are to be punished, but with this caution: that he who denies himself to be a Christian and makes it plain that he is not so by supplicating to our gods, although he had been so formerly, may be allowed pardon upon his repentance. As for libels sent without an author, they ought to have no place in any accusation whatsoever, for that would be a thing of very ill example and not agreeable to my reign.

Pliny involuntarily pays a wonderful tribute to the Christians in his letter to Trajan when he says, speaking of some that recanted upon examination and cursed Christ, that "none of which things, as it is said, can any of those that are really Christians be compelled to do."

Another significant thing is that this letter shows that, even at that time, Christianity embraced "many of every age, of every rank, and of both sexes."

This letter of Pliny's was written not later than eighty years after the crucifixion of Christ, as the time is fixed in the four Gospels. Therefore a man ninety years of age at the time Pliny was making his examinations of the Christians could remember whether the allegations made by the biographers of Christ, that there was darkness over all the earth at the time Christ died, were true.

The martyrs of the first century after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ are all witnesses to the truth of the claims of Christianity; and the

blood of these early martyrs, of those who knew by personal observation of Christ and his work, is the strongest possible proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ. The blood of those unnamed Christians who suffered persecution for their faith cries to us across twenty centuries and tells us that these Christians knew who Christ was and that he was God, and therefore they died for him.

CHAPTER VI

The Testimony of Josephus

1. The mention of Jesus Christ and of James and John the Baptist by Josephus strongly corroborates the testimony contained in the sacred text, showing the historical appearance of Christ and proving his divinity.

Flavius Josephus was born at Jerusalem in A.D. 37, or about four years after Jesus Christ had completed his mission on earth.

His father, Matthias, was a priest, whose duty it was to officiate in the first of the twenty-four courses; and his mother was of a royal family, being descended from the line of the Asmonean princes.

Josephus was highly educated and possessed a thorough knowledge of both Hebrew and Greek, and very early in life he became famous for his great learning and ability.

He was in the Roman army at the siege of Jerusalem by Titus in the year 70; and after the fall of the city and the destruction of the temple, he returned to Rome and engaged in literary pursuits.

He wrote a history of the Jews, which he entitled "Antiquities of the Jews," in twenty books; the

"Wars of the Jews," in seven books; and "Against Apion," in two volumes. He also wrote his "Autobiography," in one volume.

His "Antiquities" contained the history of the Jews from the earliest times down to the death of Nero and embraced the period of the life of Jesus Christ on earth.

Josephus is regarded as one of the most accurate and truthful historians of all ages. His style is easily recognizable, and on this account the authenticity of any quotation or pretended quotation from his books can readily be determined.

In Book XVIII., Chapter III., of the "Antiquities of the Jews," Josephus relates how Pilate, the Procurator of Judea, removed the army from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, how he set up Cæsar's image in the city of Jerusalem, and how he undertook to bring a current of water to Jerusalem with the sacred money of the Jews, and then adds:

Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. *He was the Christ.* And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day,

as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

This passage from Josephus accords with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ so fully and perfectly that, granting its authenticity, its value as corroborative evidence can hardly be estimated. It contains in a few lines a reference, more or less explicit, to the principal events of the history of Christ as contained in the biographies of him by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and its importance is recognized at once.

The value of this quotation as evidence corroborative of the record and history of Christ as contained in the four Gospels is so well recognized that infidelity has attacked the passage with as much energy as it ever displayed in criticizing the Scriptural narrative. It is a significant fact, however, that only those reject this passage as spurious who deny everything else connected with the history of Jesus Christ, especially everything that affirms the divinity of Christ.

The authenticity of the quotation, however, is now practically admitted. The early Christian writers, including Origen and Eusebius, declare that the paragraph quoted is authentic, and nearly all the

Christian writers of the first few centuries quoted this passage from Josephus.

Even Renan, who denies the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ, admits the authenticity of the passage, though he thinks it possible that the words "if it be lawful to call him a man" were added by some translator. "I believe the passage respecting Jesus to be authentic," says Renan. (See "Life of Jesus," by Ernest Renan, author's Introduction.)

Josephus refers to Jesus Christ in another place; and this passage has never been questioned, so far as I have been able to learn. Its authenticity seems to be admitted. Referring to the stoning to death of James, the apostle, and some others in Jerusalem at the instigation of Ananus, the high priest, Josephus says:

But this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders above the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed. When, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity to exercise his authority. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges and brought before them *the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ,* whose name was James, and some others. And when he had formed an accusation against them as break-

ers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned. But as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done; they also sent to the king, desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified. Nay, some of them went also to meet Albinus as he was upon his journey from Alexandria and informed him that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble a Sanhedrin without his consent. Whereupon Albinus complied with what they said and wrote in anger to Ananus and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done. On which King Agrippa took the priesthood from him when he had ruled but three months and made Jesus the son of Damneus high priest.

We have, then, two direct references to Jesus Christ in the histories of Josephus; and in each instance his full name is given; Jesus Christ and Jesus called Christ.

Now, among the Jews (and Josephus was a Jew) the name Christ meant the Messiah, the anointed of God, a person that was the *Christ*. It is a little uncertain, however, whether Josephus intended to use the term in its strict Jewish sense or simply as a means of distinguishing Jesus from many others named Jesus. The name Jesus was very common in those days, as is shown by the frequency of the appearance of the name in the histories of Josephus.

If Josephus used the name of Christ in the Jewish

sense, the inference might be legitimately raised that he was a Christian, because for him to say that Jesus was the Christ would imply that he meant to recognize him as the promised Messiah of the Jews. To say that he was called Christ would not sustain such inference; and it will be noticed that he uses the name both ways—that is, in the passage referring directly to Jesus Christ he says directly that he was the Christ, while in the passage last quoted referring to the stoning of James he uses the expression that he was called Christ.

There are several things that would seem to justify the conclusion that Josephus meant to use the name of Christ in the strict Jewish sense. For instance, he nowhere approves of the persecution of the Christians, as Tacitus and Pliny do, and at no time does he speak of them derisively, like Tacitus and Pliny; but, on the contrary, we find that he denounces the cruelties practiced upon the Christians and speaks of John the Baptist as a good man and says that the stoning of James and others was not to be justified.

Josephus wrote his histories in Rome, and they were intended for the Romans and Greeks, which very probably accounts for the fact that more is not said about the history of Jesus Christ in the "An-

tiquities" of Josephus. The Jewish nation had been destroyed at the time these histories were written, and possibly Josephus did not care to turn missionary to the Greeks and Romans. The awful persecution of the Christians in Rome under Nero might have suggested to him also that the rôle of a missionary would not be very pleasant at that time.

However, I hardly think that Josephus meant to declare himself a Christian. If so, he doubtless would have explained the meaning of the name Christ to his Roman and Greek readers, for he was a very accurate writer. At most, he was only one of the Ebionite Christians who accepted the now obsolete and repudiated Gospel according to the Hebrews and believed that Jesus was the true Messiah, but denied his divinity. The Ebionites also insisted on the observance of the Mosaic system of worship as far as such worship was possible after the destruction of the temple, which prevented the full observance of the ancient ceremonial law. To place Josephus with the Ebionites or Nazarenes fully accords with his use of the language quoted from him as to Christ.

It is not necessary, however, to determine whether he was a Christian or not. He was writing a history of the Jews; and in order to fully discharge

his duties as a historian he was bound to mention such public persons as Jesus Christ, James, and John the Baptist; and very likely, if he had been writing for the Jews, he would have mentioned all the apostles.

Would the Jews have permitted the testimony of Josephus as to Jesus Christ to stand unchallenged if they had not known that what was written was true?

The Jews were always jealous of their national history. The nation had just been destroyed a few years before; and here were charges, made by the greatest of all Jewish historians, that the high priest and rulers of the Jews, thirty-seven years prior to the destruction of the nation, had slain the Christ and, only a few years afterwards and while the nation still existed, had wickedly and wantonly stoned James, the brother of Jesus and a good man, and others to death. These charges were made directly against the Jewish nation. Is it reasonable to suppose that these learned leaders of the Jews would have allowed such serious charges against their people to stand unchallenged if the accusations had been false?

As further corroborating the four Gospels, Josephus refers especially to John the Baptist and speaks

of him as a good man and as one who baptized the people.

Josephus says that the Jews purchased his histories, especially the "Wars of the Jews." They were evidently interested, therefore, in the history of their fallen people.

We have, then, the testimony of Josephus, the great Jewish historian, that Jesus Christ was wise, that he was a doer of wonderful works, that he was a great teacher, that he drew over to him many of the Jews and Gentiles, that he was the Christ, that he was condemned to the cross by Pilate at the suggestion of the principal men among the Jews, that he rose again from the dead on the third day and appeared alive to those that loved him, and that all these things and ten thousand other wonderful things had been foretold of him by the divine prophets.

The Jews permitted this record made by Josephus of matters of Jewish history and the same record made by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to go unchallenged. *Why?*

CHAPTER VII

The Invention of Such a Character Impossible

1. The invention by human beings of such a character as Jesus Christ would have been impossible.

Infidelity boldly charges that Jesus Christ was a fictitious character; and, therefore, for the purpose of determining the value of the evidence to support the charge on the one hand and to refute it on the other, let us imagine that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, with minds unaided by inspiration and unguided by truth, simply entered into a conspiracy to manufacture the character and write the life of the Messiah, the Son of God.

They had two things to aid them in this sacrilegious conspiracy:

(1) Their natural abilities plus their education.

(2) The descriptions of the Messiah as contained in the Old Testament.

Of the natural abilities of the men, nothing is known except what is revealed in their writings, and the same is true of their education. Nothing more than mediocre ability is shown, and none of

the four Gospels would indicate that the writer was a man of extensive learning.

Some familiarity with the prophecies relating to Christ is shown by Matthew, Luke, and John, but not much by Mark. Either direct or vague allusions to these prophecies are made by John thirty-six times, by Matthew twenty-seven times, by Luke nineteen times, and by Mark only four times.

Of these prophecies, I observe that many of them are so veiled and vague as to their meaning that no intelligent person attempting to fabricate a purely fictitious life of the Messiah would have thought of them as having the remotest connection with the subject. Indeed, most of these references to the prophecies are so vague that it requires an exercise of the imagination of zealous theologians to see any connection between them at all.

Assuming, then, that Christ is a fictitious person, one fact is established by these four writers with certainty, and that is that they desired to present the claims of the Messiah to the Jews alone. There is not the slightest intimation in any of the four books that the writer ever conceived the idea that the mission of the Messiah was to any persons outside of the Jews; and the prophecies concerning the Messiah, which constituted the only source from which

they could have drawn the picture and made it pleasing to the Jews, clearly sanctioned that idea. Indeed, according to the record, the boldest of all the apostles, Simon Peter, had to be convinced by a miracle that the Gentiles had any claim to the salvation provided by Christ, notwithstanding the fact that this same Christ, in his last message delivered just before the ascension to heaven, had commanded his disciples to go "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark xvi. 15.)

The very commission that Christ gave to his twelve disciples prohibited all communication with the Gentiles.

> "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. x. 5, 6.)

There can be no doubt about the fact that the Jewish conception of the Messiah was that he was to be an earthly king of the Jews, and the prophecies concerning him seem to encourage this view. All the disciples had the same conception of Christ up to the time he made himself known to them after his resurrection. They abandoned him when he died; and even the empty tomb did not convince

them, because it is said that after viewing the empty sepulcher they still "knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home." (John xx. 9, 10.) Even when two of them told the others they had seen him, they did not believe.

> "And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them." (Mark xvi. 13.)

Even after his resurrection they still thought he was to be an earthly king.

> "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6.)

It is inconceivable that Jewish writers, drawing from Jewish prophecies for their information upon which to build the character of the Messiah they were to present to the Jews, should have painted the picture in a form not only unacceptable, but utterly detestable to the Jews.

The four books bear internal evidence that they were not written by the same person and that each book was composed by a different author. It is hardly possible that four persons, without any concert of action, could have painted the portrait of the

Messiah in colors so nearly alike; and, on the other hand, it is equally clear that four persons acting in concert would have produced greater harmony in describing events than is shown in the four Gospels. A forgery is always done with great accuracy as to details.

In order to copy the picture of the Messiah as portrayed in the prophecies found in the Old Testament, which prophecies constituted the only guide for authors seeking to manufacture a fictitious life and history of the Christ, the authors would have been compelled to make the picture attractive to the Jews. He was to be a prophet like unto Moses (Deut. xviii. 15-19), a king possessing an everlasting kingdom (Dan. vii. 14), a leader and commander of the people (Isa. lv. 4), and a great high priest after the order of Melchizedek (Ps. cx. 4.)

The writers of the four Gospels evidently had the idea that the Messiah was to come to the Jews alone, but the very fact that they did not paint the portrait in a manner pleasing to the Jews shows beyond all question that they were not writing a fictitious history.

By examining the four books together we find that the first three, generally called the Synoptic, simply record the acts and sayings of Jesus without

comment; and sometimes noticeable discrepancies arise, but this simply shows that the books are genuine and that they were not written in concert.

In the first place, I argue that the books themselves show incontestably that the writers simply meant to chronicle events somewhat in the order of their happening and that there is no evidence even tending to show that the authors of the books ever attempted to paint a picture of the Messiah to meet the expectations of the Jews or to meet their own expectations.

They at no time clothe him with kingly dignity. He was born in a manger. (Luke ii. 7.) He possessed nothing. There is no evidence that he ever earned or owned a penny, and he said of himself:

> "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Luke ix. 58.)

He ignored social ties and even forbade one who expressed a desire to follow him to go home and bid his family good-by. (Luke ix. 61, 62.)

He paid absolutely no attention to matters of government, and even neglected to pay his taxes until they were demanded, and then performed a miracle to get the money. (Matt. xvii. 24-27.)

He ridiculed the leaders of the Jews, the scribes

and Pharisees, and denounced them as canting hypocrites. (Matt. xxiii. 13-36.) Matthew, the first evangelist called, was a hated tax collector at the Sea of Galilee, and his selection was an affront to all Jews who despised everything connected with the Roman government.

He accomplished nothing from a worldly standpoint. If he did not sow the seeds of his religion by his teaching and his miracles, then his biographers made the ridiculous blunder of fabricating the life of a hero who did absolutely nothing to commend him. As he ascended to heaven he could not have looked back upon anything accomplished by him if he had not performed the miracles and the other acts attributed to him indicating his divinity.

So those who deny the genuineness of the four Gospels would simply put the authors of those books in the ridiculous plight of presenting to the Jews and to the world the spurious claims of a Messiah who did nothing to better the condition of Jews or Gentiles and had no claim to their allegiance in any way whatever.

The argument that the four Gospels were not written at the time they purport to have been written, but that they first appeared a century or two later, is too ridiculous to merit consideration. Pro-

fane history shows that the Christians were persecuted in Jerusalem and in Rome within thirty years after the death of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels. So these Christians who then attested their faith in Christ by enduring persecution must have learned of Christ either by personal observation of him or through the four Gospels.

The character of the Christ as given in the four Gospels is so sublime that it staggers belief to think that such a divine picture could have been painted by human imagination. The human mind has its limitations. It is the most intensely human part of man. It is utterly impossible for it to throw off its shackles and divest itself of the human, and whatever it produces must necessarily partake of the human element. It may rise and explore the ethereal, but its wings will invariably have an earthly flap.

The human mind cannot invent the character of Deity. If it were possible for all the wisdom of the world to be concentrated and combined in one brain, the possessor of that brain could not create the character of Jesus Christ as portrayed in the four Gospels.

Blackstone, in his "Commentaries," speaking of the law of revelation as contained in the Holy Scrip-

tures and of the insufficiency of the moral law as discovered in our own consciences as a guide to human conduct without revelation, says:

> And if our reason were always, as in our first ancestor before his transgression, clear and perfect, unruffled by passions, unclouded by prejudice, unimpaired by disease or intemperance, the task would be pleasant and easy; we should need no other guide but this. But every man now finds the contrary in his own experience: that his reason is corrupt and his understanding full of ignorance and error.
>
> This has given manifold occasion for the benign interposition of Divine Providence, which in compassion to the frailty, the imperfection, and the blindness of human reason hath been pleased at sundry times and in divers manners to discern and enforce its laws by an immediate and direct revelation.

Again, Mr. Blackstone, in connection with the same subject, says:

> Yet undoubtedly the revealed law is of infinitely more authenticity than that moral system which is framed by ethical writers and denominated the natural law. . . . Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws.

The authors of the four Gospels, assuming for the sake of argument that they fabricated the story of the Christ, had before them as their guide this moral law of the human conscience and the divine law as it had been revealed at that time; but, without the aid of inspiration and without the aid of any

actual facts to guide them according to the claims of infidelity, these four unlearned men, none of whom had ever paid any attention to religious matters before, constructed a system of religion and morality infinitely superior to that inculcated in the Ten Commandments or in all the revelations of the divine will up to that time.

The superiority of the system of morals as interpreted by the Christ over the interpretation given by Moses is so well stated in an opinion of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia, reported in No. 46, "West Virginia Reports," page 515, that I take the liberty to quote from it. The case was one in which a young prosecuting attorney was removed from office for immorality, and the defense was that he was not guilty of "gross immorality" within the meaning of the statute. The court, in an opinion delivered by Dent, P., said:

On page 65, Sharswood's "Blackstone's Commentaries," it is said that the illustrious King Alfred adopted the Ten Commandments as the foundation of the early laws of England, contained in his Doom Book. These commandments, which, like a collection of diamonds, bear testimony to their own intrinsic worth, in themselves appeal to us as coming from a superhuman or divine source, and no conscientious or reasonable man has yet been able to find a flaw in them. Absolutely flawless, negative in terms, but positive in meaning, they easily stand at the head of our whole moral system, and no na-

tion or people can long continue a happy existence in open violation of them. To them, however, there are two widely different interpretations, both claiming to be moral—that is, the just and true rule for the conduct of man, to secure him the greatest happiness in harmony with the conditions of his existence. The first is, though second in time, what is presented as truly the divine interpretation. It is given to man by Christ, who represents that he came, not to destroy the law, but to fulfill, and by precept and example to illustrate and make plain its true meaning and force according to the divine will. It is positive in its nature and is founded upon the broad, fundamental principle that no man belongs to himself or has the right to do as he pleases with himself, but that he holds his body, mind, soul, and property of every description by divine grant in trust for the benefit of his fellow men. It requires the doing of good at all times, the love of enemies, the giving to him that asketh, the loaning to any one that would borrow without the expectation of any return, and the complete devotion of self to the commonwealth of humanity and the establishment of a kingdom of perfect righteousness. It condemns resistance to evil. War under any plea, even for humanity's sake, it does not justify, but condemns in unmistakable terms. It goes still further, enters the human heart as the foundation of all evil, and denounces the very conception thereof without overt act. It destroys all distinction between morality and religion. It makes the laws of morality concur fully with the laws of religion. According to it, he who serves man best worships God best, and he who worships God best serves man best. All other religion it denounces as pure hypocrisy. Because of their incapacity to understand it through inability to live it, men deny it or wrest its meaning to suit their living, of whom it is said: "Ye are they which

justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God." Its ostensible purpose is to make men perfect in all their conduct as their Creator is perfect. Man's environment, including his heritage and hereditary traits of character, customs, laws, business relations, and acquired necessities, is to an almost immeasurable degree directly opposed thereto. Hence they are immoral, not being in conformity with the will of God, and render man immoral. Thus have mankind woven around themselves, thread by thread, an invisible web which they are powerless to break. Nor does this interpretation admit of degrees of morality, for all disobedience is equally heinous in the sight of God and all immorality gross immorality. "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep my commandments." To accept it we are compelled to admit at once that all mankind, either consciously or unconsciously, are guilty of gross immorality. Hence most men reject it, for they would rather be blind and leaders of the blind and perish in the same pit than sit in condemnation of their own lives. To live in accordance with it in the present condition of the world's affairs requires a complete surrender of self, the giving up of worldly pleasures and enjoyments, the repression of all lustful passions and ambitions, and an entire devotion of time, service, and energies to the elevation of mankind in regaining for them that greater liberty which must follow when the knowledge of truth fills the earth as the waters cover the sea. This interpretation of the laws of morality cannot govern in this case, for it has never been accepted as or become a part of the law of the land. If such were the case, we would have no need of prosecuting attorney, judge, or court.

The other interpretation, known as the Mosaic, human, or negative, is founded on absolute justice between man and man. It is made necessary by the bold assumption that every man belongs to himself and has the right to do as he pleases with himself so long as he accords the same right to others and does nothing hurtful to interfere with their enjoyment thereof; in short, that he does not do unto others what he would not have them do unto him. If he does so, he is guilty of immorality, which may be slight or gross, according to circumstances. This interpretation demands "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." While the former is intended to secure perfection, the latter is intended for the government of an imperfect, self-willed, ignorant, stubborn, and hard-hearted people and for the suppression of vice, injustice, and wrong among them. If all people were truly moral, human laws and government would be unnecessary; for the laws of nature, written in their hearts and perfectly understood by them, would be a sufficient guidance in their dealings with each other. Where no wrongs are committed there exists no necessity for punishment, compensation, or restitution, and human enactments in relation thereto become obsolete. No man need say to his neighbor, "Know the law"; for all would know it, from the least to the greatest. But where society is constituted on such an immoral basis as to continually increase the wants and arouse the selfish propensities of mankind, and yet render them proportionately harder of attainment and satisfaction, human law becomes of increasing necessity to suppress and control these wants and propensities for the common good; otherwise a state of immoral anarchy would be the result, deserving the just condemnation, once requiring his extinction, that "the imagina-

tions of a man's heart are evil continually from his youth up." The morality of our laws is the morality of the Mosaic interpretation of the Ten Commandments, modified only as to the degree or kind of punishment inflicted.

The impossibility of the invention of such a character as that of Jesus Christ is beautifully and forcibly expressed by Rousseau:

How petty are the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp, compared with the Gospels! Can it be that writings at once so sublime and so simple are the work of men? Can He whose life they tell be Himself no more than a mere man? Is there anything in His character of the enthusiast or the ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in His ways, what touching grace in His teachings! What a loftiness in His maxims, what profound wisdom in His words! What presence of mind, what delicacy and aptness in His replies! What an empire over His passions! Where is the man, where is the sage who knows how to act, to suffer, and to die without weakness and without display? My friend, men do not invent like this; and the facts respecting Socrates, which no one doubts, are not so well attested as those about Jesus Christ. These Jews could never have struck this tone or thought of this morality; and the gospel has characteristics of truthfulness so grand, so striking, so perfectly inimitable that their inventors would be even more wonderful than He whom they portray.

CHAPTER VIII

Inspiration

1. The authors of the four Gospels were inspired to recall the events and teachings of Jesus Christ, but inspiration did not extend to the very language used nor to unimportant details of fact.

No chance to attack Christianity has ever been allowed to slip by unnoticed. When Christ said that the gates of hell should not prevail against his Church, the counter proposition was evidently implied—that is, that the portals of hell would be opened against it.

Possibly the swiftest arrows of infidelity have been shot at the Christian doctrine of inspiration. It has been denounced for the slightest inconsistency of statement, ridiculed as unreasonable, and laughed at as foolish.

However, it has withstood all the assaults that have been hurled against it and still stands out as one of the great doctrinal Gibraltars of the Church and still receives the assent of thinking and intelligent men and women.

Before proceeding to argue the affirmative of the

issue, I admit that microscopic criticism has discovered many inconsistencies in the Holy Scriptures—statements of fact that are seemingly inconsistent with history or with science; statements of one writer that vary from the accounts of the same events by another writer, inaccurate quotations, varieties of style that show the individuality of the different authors, and many other things that prove that they were written by men and contain evidences of the frailty of human nature. God has always selected men to do his work among men, and the writers of the Holy Scriptures were human messengers.

An examination of these imperfections and contradictions will show that they are all unimportant and that none of them could have the effect of destroying belief in the doctrine of inspiration in any person who approaches the subject without bias. The four Gospels are most frequently attacked, and I give a few of the most prominent instances.

(1) Matthew makes the devil take Christ to the pinnacle of the temple and ask that he cast himself down from there before they go to the top of the high mountain (Matt. iv. 5); while Luke does not mention the visit to the temple, but takes them to the top of the mountain at first (Luke iv. 5). In

other words, one simply mentions a fact that the other omits.

(2) In commissioning the disciples to go out into the world to work, Matthew says that Christ directed them to provide for their journey neither scrip, two coats, shoes, nor yet *staves* (Matt. x. 10), while Mark says that the command was to take a *staff* only (Mark vi. 8).

(3) Matthew (xxvi. 74) and Luke (xxii. 60) make the cock crow only once while Christ is being tried before the Sanhedrin, while Mark (xiv. 72) makes the cock crow twice.

(4) Matthew (xxvii. 44) and Mark (xv. 32) make both the malefactors who were crucified with Christ revile him; while Luke (xxiii. 39, 40) makes only one of them revile him, and the other rebukes the reviler; and John says nothing about this matter.

These differences simply show that absolute infallibility in the Scriptural text is not required in order to support the doctrine of inspiration. A fair, candid, and unprejudiced investigation of the Scriptures will show that they contain messages of eternal truth that uninspired human minds never could have produced. They contain wells of living and divine knowledge that are not found anywhere

else. A divine spirit shines on every page and makes itself felt in the heart and mind of every candid reader, and he consciously recognizes the fact that God is speaking directly to him out of the sacred page.

There are several theories of the doctrine of inspiration, most of them puerile in conception. One, known as the theory of plenary inspiration, insists that the entire Scripture is inspired—every page, every word, and every letter—and that the words were immediately dictated by the Holy Spirit and are literally the words of God. Others confine the doctrine to that which is essentially religious and discard facts connected with science and history. Others attribute inspiration only to the spirit, ideas, or doctrine of the Scriptures and exempt the form, modes of argument, and expository details.

Without stopping to discuss the merits of the different theories about the subject, it is sufficient here to say that all orthodox theologians agree that an inspired book is one that possesses an authority different from any other book, that it contains truth by divine impress, that it is supernatural in its origin, and that the author is simply a messenger bearing knowledge beyond the reach of ordinary human intelligence.

Viewed in this light, the slight contradictions, inaccuracies, and errors found in the Holy Scriptures are not serious objections to the doctrine of inspiration; and the fact that the most industrious efforts of critics can discover no really serious defects constitutes the most striking evidence of the truthfulness of the Scriptures.

The doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ depends so largely upon the four Gospels by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and is so conclusively settled by these four books, if we once admit that they speak the truth or prove that they do, that I deem it unnecessary to discuss the question of inspiration except as applied to these four men.

As to these four authors, I think the measure of inspiration that guided them was stated by Jesus Christ in his wonderful message to them in the fourteenth chapter of John.

> "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John xiv. 25, 26.)

Here was an express promise of Christ to his disciples that after he was gone from them the prin-

cipal events and important teachings of his life would be recalled to their remembrance by the Holy Ghost, so that they could impart to others the wonderful information they possessed. It seems to me that this is all that is necessarily meant by the inspiration of these men.

Their memories were to be divinely enlivened and their minds divinely impressed with the truth. Each one of the four books bears the unmistakable impress of divine truth. Events the most important and startling that ever happened on earth are recorded in simple narrative form, without comment and without unnecessary details. A new religion, superseding all other religions and demanding the undivided allegiance of all mankind, is proclaimed in the same simple language, without ostentation and without comment. New rules of life, morals, ethics, society, citizenship, rules that touch human life at every point, are promulgated in verbiage of such simple beauty that the very pages shine with a divine luster.

The fact that the religion taught in these four books is so superior to every other system of religion in the world as to command the allegiance of the most intelligent and cultured races is another strong evidence that the writers of the books were

inspired to speak the truth. It is inconceivable that uninspired men could have invented such a system of religion, clothed it in such beautiful language, and fortified it with the many wonderful incidents that attest its divine origin.

The strongest proof that God acts directly upon the minds of men and inspires them to write of things that are beyond the unaided knowledge of men is found in the prophecies of the ancient seers. We know that many things foretold in the prophecies of the Bible actually occurred hundreds of years after the predictions were written.

There is in man an intuitive perception of the divine. Upon this subject Argyll, in his "Unity of Nations," Chapter XI., page 266, very emphatically says:

> The existence of a Being from whom our own being has been derived involves at least the possibility of some communication, direct or indirect. Yet the impossibility or improbability of any such communication is another of the assumptions continually involved in current theories about the origin of religion. Yet it is quite certain that no such assumption can be reasonably made. The perceptions of the human mind are accessible to the intimations of external truth through many avenues of approach. In its very structure it is made to be responsive to some of these intimations by apprehension. Man has that within him by which the invisible can be seen and the inaudible can be heard and the intangible

can be felt. Not as the result of any reasoning, but by the same power by which it sees and feels the postulates on which all reasoning rests, the human mind may from the very first have felt that it was in contact with a Mind which was the fountain of its own.

CHAPTER IX

The World Honors Him as God

1. Jesus Christ did nothing as a man, and all the honors bestowed upon his name are rendered to him only as God.

The biographers of Jesus Christ portray him as divine, as God, and they repudiate any claim of distinction for him as man.

The entire structure of Christianity rests upon this doctrine of the divinity of Christ; and if he was not born God, if he did not live and work as God, and if he did not die and rise from the dead as God, then the whole fabric falls, and the Christian religion is nothing but a myth and a delusion.

Upon this claim Christianity challenges the world. It admits of no compromise and tolerates no other claim.

According to his biographers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—he did nothing as a man, and they claim nothing for him as a man.

He was not an author. Only once did he ever attempt to write anything, so far as the record shows; and then he simply wrote with his finger in

the dust and sand as a rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees, who brought a woman before him accused of some offense, tempting him, and what he wrote then has not even been preserved. (John viii. 8.)

He was not a painter nor a sculptor, although both of these arts had attained a high degree of excellence in his day.

He was not an inventor. The rudest implements of industry were in use in his time, the number of industries was quite limited, and the hard lot of the laborer was not lightened by the use of machinery as in the present day; but he made no improvements and offered no suggestions looking to an amelioration of the laborer's condition.

He was not a social reformer, although evidences of the necessity of work in this line confronted him on all sides. There were no common schools, and no efforts were made to educate the poor. The women did a large part of the work, even in the fields; and beggars stood on the streets and sat by the wayside wherever he went. No record is made of his ever having done anything for the social or material welfare of the people among whom he lived for thirty-three years.

He was not a statesman. His own people, the

Jews, were in a state of subjection to the Romans, and the rod of government was heavy and galling to them. The rule of the Roman was so complete and despotic that, according to his biographers, Herod could cause all the male infants in a large territory to be killed without responsibility and could cause John the Baptist to be beheaded in prison without a trial and his head to be presented to a bad woman simply to please her, and yet he never attempted to work out any reformation of government.

The only thing he ever did as a citizen was to pay his taxes, and he did this by sending Peter to the sea with a hook and line, with instructions to take a piece of money out of the mouth of the first fish that he caught and give it to the collector of tribute. (Matt. xvii. 24.)

No effort of man to honor him as man has ever succeeded; but, on the contrary, efforts to extend his kingdom and to implant the doctrine of his divinity in the minds and hearts of the people have prospered everywhere.

For nearly two hundred years the crusaders sought to wrest the holy sepulcher from the hands of the Moslems, and countless treasures and much blood were wasted in the vain attempt to prevent the crescent of Mahomet from waving over the

sacred place; but Richard Cœur de Lion and the kings of Europe that engaged in the wars of the crusades overlooked the fact that the Christ had rebuked the use of the sword in his behalf even when Roman soldiers came at night to take him and kill him.

The Czar of Russia, as late as 1852, demanded a protectorate over the sacred places of Palestine and appealed to religious zeal for the purposes of unholy conquest; but the avowed object of the Crimean War, as well as of the crusades, was to confer earthly glory upon the name of Christ, and the Czar met inglorious defeat everywhere.

"My kingdom is not of this world," said Christ; and the ages that have passed since that declaration was made have witnessed the failure of every effort of men to confer upon him earthly glory.

The miracles he performed, as related by his biographers (and I am taking the record as I find it), proclaim his divinity; and all of his teachings have the ring of divine wisdom in them, tending to prove the assertion that "he taught them as one having authority" (Matt. vii. 29) and to confirm the estimate placed upon him by the officers who were first sent to take him that "never man spake like this man" (John vii. 46).

Civilization has adopted the day of Christ's nativity as the date from which time is reckoned. The decrees of emperors and kings, diplomatic correspondence, court records, letters, and even the checks drawn by Jews are all dated *Anno Domini.*

Suppose the emperor of Rome had issued a decree that time should be reckoned from the date of the birth of some man who had never distinguished himself as a man in any way. At the time of Christ the dominion of Rome extended over what is now known as England, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Prussia, Turkey, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Egypt, Algeria, Tripoli, Tunis, Morocco, Persia, Arabia, and a portion of Russia and Austria. The population of all these countries was greater than the present population of the United States, being more than one hundred and twenty millions.

Could such a decree have been enforced? Would the civilized world be using such a reckoning of time to-day?

All the potentates in the world at that time could not have joined in such a degree and caused its adoption by the nations of the earth; and yet, because a comparatively obscure monk suggested that time be reckoned from the birth of Jesus Christ, all the intelligent peoples of the world adopted the sug-

gestion. Thus the intelligence of the world silently testifies that Jesus Christ was divine.

A large portion of the intelligence of the world admits the claim of Christ's divinity. The mightiest intellectual forces of the last twenty centuries have yielded assent to that claim. It is no longer said that only the ignorant, the fanatical, and the sentimental part of mankind have faith in Christ; but to-day intellectual giants proclaim the doctrine of his divinity from the pulpit, the greatest authors tinge every page of their books with the glow of the gospel, and statesmen are earnest in avowing their belief in him.

We have monuments of stone, marble, and brass erected to men who, in all ages of the world, have distinguished themselves as scientists, authors, inventors, warriors, poets, and in other useful occupations of life. We honor them as men; but the civilized world, by common consent silently expressed, honors Jesus Christ only as God.

The belief of mankind in the divinity of Jesus Christ is expressed in the best literature, painting, and sculpture produced in the world within the last two thousand years.

Vast wealth is annually expended to help spread this doctrine among the adherents of other religions,

and the voice of the missionary is heard wherever human beings exist. Intelligent, mentally balanced men and women daily devote their best energies to the propagation of the doctrine of Christ's divinity; and although the enemies of Christianity assert that progress has been slow, yet it must be remembered that the work is the most stupendous ever undertaken by human beings.

It is inconceivable that the most intelligent people in the world would bestow such honors upon one who was utterly devoid of merit as a man, but who asserted a spurious claim to divinity.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. I subscribe fully to the doctrine that Jesus was both human and divine; and I hope that I do not underestimate the value of his wonderful personality, viewed from the human standpoint. There is not a real human virtue in which he did not excel, and he possessed every trait of character that really ennobles the human race.

He was compassionate. When the multitudes followed him for days without food, he miraculously fed them.

> "Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me

> now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way. . . . And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled." (Matt. xv. 32-37.)

He was sympathetic. When death entered a home and took therefrom a beloved member of the family, he mingled his tears with those of the bereaved.

"Jesus wept." (John xi. 35.)

He was brave. When Roman soldiers came to the garden of Gethsemane at night to take him and kill him and declared that they sought Jesus of Nazareth, he boldly replied: "I am he." (John xviii. 5.)

He possessed a loving disposition. While his great heart took in all humanity, his special love for John showed that he entertained a preferential fondness for really congenial natures.

> "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved." (John xiii. 23.)

He was patriotic. He admonished his hearers to observe and respect the laws of the country and declared that it was proper to "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." (Matt. xxii. 21.)

He was democratic. He mingled with the common people wherever he went and never even rode, but once, and that was on a borrowed ass. (Matt. xxi. 7.)

He observed social customs. He attended a marriage supper as an invited guest and performed his first miracle in order that the social feature of the occasion might be a success. (John ii. 1-11.)

He suffered mental and soul anguish. Not only did he weep with Martha and Mary over the death of Lazarus; but in the dark hour just before his trial and death he declared that his very soul was sorrowful and prayed that, if it were possible, he might escape the suffering before him. (Mark xiv. 34, 35.)

I am not, however, very much in sympathy with a certain class of modern writers who magnify the human side of Jesus and exalt him as a man working as a man among men, to the disparagement of his claim to divinity.

Some of these modern writers even present us with a picture of Jesus as a schoolboy attending

school and being taught after the method of teaching children in Judea two thousand years ago. The record shows that he never attended school at all and never learned anything after the manner of learning among men.

> "Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John vii. 14, 15.)

It is true that Jesus "increased in wisdom," according to the record, but this does not mean that his advancement in wisdom was acquired from any teacher; but rather the contrary is to be inferred, because just preceding that statement that he increased in wisdom and stature it is declared that at the very early age of twelve he was with the learned men among the Jews in the temple asking them questions and that "all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." (Luke ii. 47.)

He is also spoken of as a carpenter working at his trade as other laborers. There is no evidence that he ever performed any manual labor, and it would have been inconsistent for him to have done so. Labor is a penalty inflicted on man for sin; and

Jesus Christ was without sin and, therefore, not subject to the penalty. We know that he absolutely refused to have anything to do with business affairs.

> "And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke xii. 13, 14.)

According to the record, he did not teach the people as a man. His doctrines were so simple and at the same time so fresh and sublime that they astonished the people.

> "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Matt. vii. 28, 29.)

Indeed, the evidence shows that he did not even speak as a man. Roman officers sent to arrest him, presumably by authority, returned with the mandate of the law unexecuted, saying: "Never man spake like this man." (John vii. 46.)

CHAPTER X

The Prophecy of Caiaphas

1. According to the record, the last prophecy ever uttered concerning Jesus Christ was made by the high priest who presided at his trial, and this prophecy shows that Jesus was offered by the high priest as the last and final sacrifice.

In consequence of the great excitement attending the raising of Lazarus from the dead, as alleged by John, the Sanhedrin held a council and discussed the growing popularity of Jesus and then for the first time resolved to put him to death.

They mentioned the miracles of Jesus, and it was predicted by some member of the council that if he were let alone all men would "believe on him."

It seems that the resurrection of Lazarus to life attracted more attention than either of the other miracles wrought by Jesus and caused so many of the Jews to profess faith in him that the rulers among the Jews concluded that it was advisable to put Lazarus to death also.

> "But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the

Jews went away, and believed on Jesus." (John xii. 10, 11.)

Evidently the rulers did not desire to put Jesus to death because of the miracles he performed nor on account of the good that he was doing and of which they could not have been ignorant, but they seem to have been disturbed beyond measure by reason of the fact that so many people were beginning to believe on him. By the term "believe on him," as used by the members of the Sanhedrin, they evidently meant a belief in Jesus as the Messiah, a divine Being.

In this connection I desire to call attention to the fact that only the chief priests, the scribes and Pharisees, the rulers among the Jews, members of the Sanhedrin, ever attempted to put Jesus to death or threatened to do so at any time. They followed him everywhere, sought to entrap him in his speech and doctrine, and seemed greatly concerned over the fact that the people credited his claim to divinity.

Why was it that the rulers among the Jews sought to kill Jesus simply because the people had faith in his claim of divinity?

Under the domination of Rome, the Sanhedrin had been deprived of all temporal power, except in ecclesiastical matters, and the right to inflict the

death penalty had been taken away from the Jews altogether.

Under Jewish law, blasphemy was a crime punishable with death, and the highest type of blasphemy was for one to make one's self equal with God or claim to be God.

Now, if Jesus was not in fact a divine being, then it was plain that he was daily violating this revered Jewish law.

Even if Jesus was divine—but the members of the Sanhedrin did not in good faith believe it—then it was their duty as custodians of the law to see that the law was enforced.

They had good reason to believe that Jesus claimed to be God; for he openly avowed the fact, and the people were flocking to his standard as the Christ in vast numbers. In fact, the movement toward Jesus had gained such momentum that these same rulers exclaimed among themselves:

> "Behold, the world is gone after him."
> (John xii. 19.)

But a very remarkable thing happened in that meeting of the council, according to John. He alleges that Caiaphas, the high priest, in response to the suggestion that if Jesus were let alone all men

would believe on him, actually prophesied that it was necessary that Jesus should *die for the people.*

> "And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." (John xi. 49, 50.)

How John learned what was said in the council chamber, whether through inspiration or through some friend who was a member of the Sanhedrin, is not known; but, at any rate, he proceeds to give to the language of Caiaphas just quoted a very wide and comprehensive meaning and declares that the high priest prophesied that Jesus should die for the people.

> "And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." (John xi. 51, 52.)

Whether the other members of the Sanhedrin understood the language of Caiaphas as interpreted by John is not certainly known; but they were evidently pleased, because it is declared that they im-

mediately determined to put the prophecy into execution.

> "Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death." (John xi. 53.)

Did all this really happen, as alleged by John in the record?

Men are made to serve God's purposes unwillingly and unwittingly sometimes. We have many instances in the Bible where even wicked men are represented as having been used as instruments in accomplishing the purposes of God. Joseph's brethren, notwithstanding they committed a crime in selling their brother into slavery, helped to carry out God's design in so doing.

Did Caiaphas actually know that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God?

If not, how could he prophesy that it was expedient that *Jesus* should die for the people, as alleged by John?

If Jesus was simply violating the law against blasphemy by asserting a claim to divinity, his execution under sentence of death would simply have amounted to a vindication of the law. In no reasonable sense could it have been said that, in the death of a man who set up a spurious claim to di-

vinity, it was expedient that he should die for the people. Caiaphas certainly knew this.

John alleges that Caiaphas had reference to Jesus in this prophecy. What did he mean by saying that it was *expedient that Jesus should die for the people?*

How was it expedient? How was Jesus to *die for the people?*

Could this requirement be satisfied by simply murdering Jesus under form of law, knowing that he was innocent of the charge preferred against him, or by killing him, believing the charge to be true?

It is expressly alleged that Caiaphas did not speak the words of himself, but that as high priest he prophesied that it was expedient that Jesus should die.

This is a very remarkable statement. It is saying, in effect, that Caiaphas did not utter the words simply as a man nor even as a prophet simply, but that the declaration was that of the high priest, speaking officially as well as prophetically.

It is important just here to remember that this same Caiaphas, as high priest, presided at the trial of Jesus.

There were two members of the Sanhedrin that

tried Jesus who secretly and timidly believed in him —Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, and Joseph of Arimathæa, who helped to bury him.

Possibly it was through one of these that John learned what Caiaphas said in the council.

It is expressly stated of Joseph that he did not consent to the sentence of death passed on Jesus.

> "And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counselor; and he was a good man, and a just: (the same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God." (Luke xxiii. 50, 51.)

If we are to believe the record, it seems to me that we are driven to the conclusion that Caiaphas, as well as Nicodemus and Joseph, recognized the fact that Jesus was the Son of God.

Why, then, did Caiaphas enter into the conspiracy to kill Jesus, and why did he, as presiding judge at the trial, permit Jesus to be delivered over to those who put him to death?

I know of but one answer to this question, and that is found in the prophecy of Caiaphas himself. It was *expedient* that Jesus should *die for the people.*

Caiaphas was the high priest, and as such it was

his duty to enter into the Holy of Holies once a year and there make atonement for the people. Jesus had come as the Son of God, the Messiah of ancient prophecy, to be offered as the last sacrifice, the final atonement for all sin, and it was expedient that he should be offered by the high priest in his official capacity.

Jesus said of himself:

> "The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him." (Mark xiv. 21.)

Peter, when it became necessary to elect a successor to Judas, stated expressly that Judas was simply carrying out the divine purpose when he betrayed Jesus Christ.

> "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry." (Acts i. 16, 17.)

Jesus, after his arrest, declared that he could call to his assistance legions of angels, but very plainly intimated that it was necessary that he should submit and be offered by the high priest as a final atonement for all the people in order that the prophecies concerning him might be fulfilled.

> "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.)

Observe the reason assigned by Caiaphas as to why it was expedient that one should die for the people: "That the whole nation perish not."

How could the death of some one save the nation from perishing? Perishing how? Physically, intellectually, or spiritually? There can be but one answer to these questions. It was necessary that the Christ be offered as a sacrifice to save the world from spiritual death.

The interpretation generally given to this language of Caiaphas is that, acting as a shrewd politician, he simply advised the execution of Jesus rather than allow him to win over the people to him as an expected king and thus cause the Roman government to come and destroy the Jewish nation; but this hardly meets the requirements of the text. The Romans cared nothing for the religion of the Jews, and nothing that Jesus had ever done showed any hostility toward the Roman government. The crowds that followed him were orderly, and no insurrection had attended his ministry. Since the

killing of the infants by Herod there had been no indication that the Roman government had concerned itself about the increasing popularity of Jesus, and he had advised and taught submission to the government.

Besides, such a narrow interpretation fails utterly to accord with the result to be accomplished by the death of Jesus as declared in the prophecy of Caiaphas. He was to die, "not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." The high priest had nothing to do with any other nation, and in no sense could it be said that saving the Jewish nation from destruction at the hands of the Romans by putting to death some one who was simply a man could result in gathering "together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

According to the record, Jesus Christ told the Jews to their faces, and told them plainly and in the temple, that they knew who he was.

> "Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth

> whence he is. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am." (John vii. 25-28.)

The record very clearly shows that Caiaphas knew the real character of Jesus when he condemned him to death, just as Judas knew when he betrayed him, and that Caiaphas, in his official capacity as high priest, offered Jesus as the last and final sacrifice in fulfillment of the prophecies which made it "expedient" that he should be so offered.

CHAPTER XI

The Trial of Jesus

1. The record of the trial of Jesus Christ shows that the high priest and other members of the Sanhedrin recognized his divinity and that the trial simply amounted to offering him as a final sacrifice by the high priest.

The only record of the trial of Jesus still extant is that found in the four Gospels by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These are not official records, and they were written by the friends of Jesus.

Under the Jewish law of criminal procedure the *Nasi,* or President, usually presided as chief officer of the Sanhedrin. This office at the time Jesus was tried belonged to Gamaliel; but he was a devoted disciple of Hillel and was a broad-minded man, as shown afterwards when he forbade the persecution of Peter and other apostles, saying to the chief priests that if the doctrine of the apostles was of men it would come to naught, but that if it was of God it could not be overthrown. (Acts v. 34-40.) It may be that he was kept away from the trial designedly and on account of the fact that he was

known to be a just man and one who would not permit an unjust conviction.

The high priest, however, had the right to preside at trials of this kind, and it was not uncommon for him to do so in cases where the worship of God was involved; and so Caiaphas, who was the high priest at this time, presided at the trial of Jesus.

The Sanhedrin, the great Jewish court, consisted of seventy-one members, but as small a number as twenty-three could try a case and render a verdict and decree.

This court had two clerks, one of whom sat on the right side of the presiding judge and recorded all that was charged against the accused, and the other on the left, who recorded everything in favor of the defendant. So it was a court of record. But whether the clerks performed their duties and kept a record of the trial of Jesus is not known; but very likely they did not, because if the account of the trial as made by the biographers of Christ is correct, the law of procedure was violated in almost every other respect.

Having no other record to guide us, we must be governed by what is recorded in the four Gospels in determining what was done at the trial.

Matthew says that "the chief priests, and elders,

and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; but found none." (Matt. xxvi. 59, 60.)

The allegation is not that they sought false witnesses, but false witness, evidently meaning false testimony.

But the significant allegation is that they *sought* this false testimony and found none.

Mark says that "the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none." (Mark xiv. 55.)

The significant allegation made by Mark is that they found no testimony against Jesus.

Luke makes no mention of the attempt to prove anything against Jesus by witnesses, and neither does John.

Returning to the record by Matthew and Mark, we find that many false witnesses testified at the trial, but both Matthew and Mark say that still no evidence of guilt was found against Jesus.

The prosecution, therefore, utterly failed, if we are to believe the record of the trial as made by the friends of Jesus, and he was clearly entitled to a verdict of acquittal.

The Jewish law and method of procedure guarded the rights of an accused person more carefully

than any other system known to criminal jurisprudence.

There was, in the first place, the usual presumption of innocence; and this was not a mere form, but even after conviction in a capital case, as the doomed man was led away to the place of execution, the court was required to remain in session for a time to see if any one desired to change the sentence or if any new witness in behalf of the prisoner came. An officer was required to stand at the door with a flag to signal another officer who followed the prisoner in case any change was desired in the punishment or any new evidence for the prisoner could be produced.

The votes of the younger members of the Sanhedrin were required to be taken first, in order that they might not be influenced by the opinions of the older members. A majority of at least two was necessary to convict in a capital case; but a unanimous verdict of guilty could not be rendered, since that would indicate that the prisoner had no friends in the court.

A verdict of not guilty could be rendered at any time; but in case a majority of the members of the court should be of the opinion that the prisoner was guilty, the rendition of the verdict had to be de-

ferred until the next day. No verdict for conviction could be pronounced on the day of trial. This was required in order to give time for reflection and mature deliberation, and the members of the court were expected to fast and remain together until the next day.

No trial for a capital offense could be conducted in the night, and no judicial procedure was allowed on a feast day.

The prisoner could not be required to testify against himself. This right was carefully guarded.

It required two witnesses to convict, and no conviction could then be had unless the witnesses agreed in their testimony.

It will be observed that every one of these rules was openly violated in the trial of Jesus. Indeed, the law was so flagrantly violated that the action of the court does not deserve to be dignified by the name of a trial.

The arrest was without a warrant, the trial was held in the night, the witnesses did not agree in their testimony, a verdict was procured by making the Accused testify against himself, and the verdict of guilty was rendered immediately on the day of the trial.

Why was it that these sticklers for the law ig-

nored and violated the law governing their actions so flagrantly in the case of Jesus Christ?

The record shows that the prosecution made a most ridiculous failure in the Jewish court; and Pilate pronounced Jesus not only innocent, but faultless. (Luke xxiii. 4.)

A careful reading of the record of the trial of Jesus as contained in the four Gospels leads to the conclusion that the members of the Sanhedrin recognized the fact that Jesus was divine.

When it became evident that the prosecution had failed, Caiaphas, the high priest and presiding officer of the court, abandoned the trial, so far as any attempt to observe legal procedure was concerned, and solemnly and in open violation of Jewish law called upon Jesus to tell them his true nature.

> "And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said." (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64.)

The particular language used by Jesus in his answer to the high priest is important. It is not the usual Jewish formula for an affirmative reply: "Thou sayest." The answer is: *"Thou hast said."*

This answer of Jesus to the question of the high

priest is equivalent to an affirmative assertion that the high priest knew that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of God," and that he had said so on some former occasion. The answer probably refers to the prophecy of Caiaphas mentioned in the preceding chapter.

The declaration is expressly made in the record that many of the chief rulers among the Jews recognized the divinity of Jesus Christ.

> "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." (John xii. 42.)

If this allegation of John is true, and if it is also true, as solemnly asserted in John (chapter xi., verses 47-52), that this same high priest, *acting as high priest and as a prophet,* had actually prophesied before the members of the Sanhedrin assembled in a council meeting that Jesus should die for the people and that it was expedient that he should do so, then it necessarily follows that the members of the Sanhedrin who tried Jesus not only knew of his divine origin, but that they also recognized the fact that it was necessary that Jesus should be offered as a sacrifice *"for the people."*

If it be asked here why they suffered him to be buffeted and insulted if they knew he was innocent, I answer that it was "expedient" that he should be put to death; and the only way they could secure the approval of their verdict by Pilate was by inciting the mob against Jesus.

As already stated, we are confined to the record as kept by the biographers of Jesus as to what took place at the trial.

The record as kept by Matthew says that "all the council sought false witness against Jesus." (Matt. xxvi. 59, 60.)

So, then, the allegation is that *all* the council sought *false* testimony against Jesus.

The only charge against Jesus of which the Jewish court had jurisdiction was blasphemy in falsely asserting that he was divine, and this allegation of Matthew is equivalent to a charge that every member of the Sanhedrin knew that Jesus was the Son of God. They did not seek the truth. They could not have sought the false without knowing that it was false.

The law forbade the offering of a human being as a sacrifice; and in order that Jesus might be offered as a propitiation for the sins of all the world, it was necessary that he should be offered in behalf of the

whole world and, therefore, that the sanction of Jewish and Gentile law should be obtained before the sacrifice could be made. Hence it followed that false evidence of a twofold character must be offered in order to secure a conviction.

(1) Evidence that Jesus had *falsely* asserted his divinity. It was necessary that this evidence should be false, because only an impostor who falsely and fraudulently pretended to be divine could be put to death under the law.

(2) Evidence of a treasonable nature against the Roman government. The Jewish court had lost the power to impose the death penalty, and it was necessary that the condemnation of Jesus by the Jewish court should receive the sanction of the Roman authorities. Hence his accusers before Pilate falsely testified that Jesus had forbidden the paying of tribute to Cæsar and claimed to be a king.

The purpose for which they sought the false testimony is significant. Matthew and Mark say that the purpose was not to secure a conviction, but "to put him to death." (Matt. xxvi. 59; Mark xiv. 55.)

These same members of the Sanhedrin had already resolved to put him to death, according to the record. The high priest who presided at the trial of Jesus had prophesied in a former meeting of the

Sanhedrin that it was expedient that Jesus should die for the people, and "from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death." (John xi. 53.)

A very significant thing happened when Jesus admitted his identity as the Christ, the Son of God.

> "Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?" (Mark xiv. 63.)

For the high priest to rend his clothes was a direct violation of the law.

> "And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes." (Lev. xxi. 10.)

Now, I have already argued that Caiaphas, the high priest, knew that Jesus was divine. It seems to me that we are bound to accept this view of the matter or else repudiate the record altogether. The language as contained in the record is plain and positive and is hardly susceptible of any other construction. God does not endow any one with the gift of prophecy for the purpose of predicting something that he does not see and know, and the declaration

is positively made that in making this prophecy the high priest did so as high priest as well as prophet. Surely, then, if Caiaphas really prophesied before the council that it was expedient that Jesus, whose miracles were the subject of the discussion, should die for the people, then it is but reasonable that we should go a step farther and assume that he was acquainted with the prophecies that showed that the Mosaic system of worship should cease and Christ should become the only and last great High Priest when the Christ should be offered as a final sacrifice.

According to Jewish prophecy, the old system of worshiping God through sacrifice was to cease with the death of the Christ, and he was to become the great and only High Priest.

> "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (Ps. cx. 4.)
>
> "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." (Heb. iv. 14.)

Under the old law and Jewish system of worship only the high priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies; but Jesus Christ, in his death, entered there and tore away the veil, so that the people could see that the old system had been abolished and that the

high priest could no longer perform the functions of his office.

> "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Heb. ix. 11, 12.)

When Caiaphas rent his clothes, he surrendered forever the office of high priest under the Mosaic system of worship to Jesus Christ as the last and eternal High Priest of a new and spiritual form of worship; and when the veil of the temple was rent, this change of the method of worship was proclaimed to the world.

A careful review of the record of the trial of Jesus Christ leads to the conclusion that Caiaphas, *as high priest,* having first obtained a formal verdict from the highest court of the Jews, so as to make the entire nation responsible for his act, offered Jesus as a final atonement for the people, just as he had prophesied that it was expedient to do, and that was the sole purpose of the trial.

Now, I am aware of the fact that this is not

strictly orthodox doctrine. But I am not trying to be orthodox; I am simply taking the record as I find it and construing it as I would any other record of a trial.

If it is not true that the members of the Sanhedrin knew that Jesus Christ was divine, then the record must be false.

Not only is the statement made in the eleventh chapter of John that the high priest who presided at the trial prophesied that it was expedient that Jesus should die for the people, but the allegation is repeated by John in connection with the arrest of Jesus.

> "Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." (John xviii. 12-14.)

The allegation is also made that the officers who came to arrest Jesus, on being told by Jesus that he was the one they sought, became so astounded and afraid, evidently at the idea of arresting one who made such claims to divinity, that they fainted with fright and fell backward to the ground.

> "Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground." (John xviii. 3-6.)

Possibly these were the same officers who were sent to arrest Jesus once before and returned without him, saying: "Never man spake like this man." (John vii. 46.)

Is it reasonable to suppose that no report was made to the members of the Sanhedrin of the strange things that happened at the time of the arrest of Jesus?

Another important allegation is made in this connection, and that is that Jesus performed a most wonderful miracle upon the servant of the high priest at the time the arrest was made.

> "Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus." (John xviii. 10.)

> "And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him." (Luke xxii. 51.)

Is it possible that the members of the Sanhedrin did not hear of these things? That the high priest did not hear of the miracle performed on his servant?

It may be asked here whether the members of the court, if they had actually believed Jesus to be the Son of God, would have proceeded to put him to death.

I admit that this is a staggering proposition; but if the record is true, at least two of the principal actors connected with the trial actually believed that Jesus was divine. Caiaphas, the presiding officer of the court, had actually prophesied that it was expedient that this same Jesus should die in order that the world might be saved. He could not have prophesied without having been divinely inspired to do so; and as to him, if we believe the record, we are bound to conclude that he knew that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Judas, who betrayed Jesus, had followed him as one of his disciples during his ministry, had been commissioned to perform miracles in his name, and admitted that he had betrayed "the innocent blood." So he must have known.

According to the record, God instituted the Passover, a symbolic feast especially typical of the final sacrifice of his own Son, by causing the first-born to be slain in every home throughout the land of Egypt. Jesus, at the completion of his ministry on the earth, went up to Jerusalem to partake of the Passover, knowing and declaring that he was to be slain there. Judas, one of the twelve, who had been divinely empowered to perform miracles of healing, even to the raising of the dead, was told by Jesus that he would betray his Master and directed to do it quickly, and he immediately went out and did it. Caiaphas, the high priest, after prophesying that it was necessary that Jesus should be put to death to save the world, caused him to be arrested, tried, convicted, and crucified; and after it was all over, the record declares that these two men and the others who acted with them simply did what God had "determined before to be done." (Acts iv. 27, 28.)

CHAPTER XII

The Dying Thief

1. The most wonderful confession of faith in Jesus Christ ever made by any human being was shown by the thief who was saved in the hour of death upon the cross.

The only sinner that ever received the direct, positive, and personal assurance of his Saviour that he would be saved in the other world was the thief that was pardoned while on the cross by Jesus Christ.

We do not know even the name of this thief, and his whole history up to the hour of his death is summed up in the simple word "thief"; and yet he received the greatest honor ever bestowed on any human being in all the history of the world, the honor of being personally told by a personal Saviour that he would be saved and would immediately go to live with his God and Saviour in paradise.

His faith entitled him to this honor. Let us examine the record and see the measure of his faith.

(1) He exhibited the first prerequisite to being saved: he confessed his own sin. When the other

malefactor railed on Jesus, this one rebuked him and said to the other thief:

> "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." (Luke xxiii. 40, 41.)

(2) He was not ashamed to confess Jesus before men; and he professed this faith in a God that was being beaten, buffeted, derided, and mocked by men.

(3) He expressed this faith in a dying God, a God whom men had tried and condemned as a felon, a God who was then dying in the deepest disgrace that men could heap upon him.

(4) He not only expressed this faith in a dying God, but in a God that could be killed by men. Indeed, these men were laughing at Jesus at the very time and scornfully saying that he was unable to save even himself.

2. This thief was the first human being that ever prayed to Jesus Christ to be saved in another world, and his prayer was the first recognition by men of the fact that the real mission of the Christ was to prepare the true way for saving souls in heaven.

Even the disciples of Jesus entertained the idea that the mission of Jesus Christ was to restore the earthly kingdom to Israel. This was their view

until after the coming of the Holy Ghost, which was after the ascension of the risen Christ. Not even the miraculous resurrection of the Lord convinced them of this error.

> "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6.)

So it transpired that a thief was not only the first trophy of the cross, but he was the first to proclaim to the world the doctrine of salvation in heaven through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

> "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." (Luke xxiii. 42.)

Jesus was dying, and the women around him were bewailing and lamenting him as a dying man (Luke xxiii. 27); he had just commended the care and keeping of his mother to another as one severing all earthly ties (John xix. 25-27); and yet this dying thief addressed the dying Christ as his Lord, thus recognizing a personal relationship and acknowledging the divinity of the Christ. As an individual he asked to be remembered personally, thus showing his faith in Christ as his personal Saviour; and he prayed the dying Lord to remember him in the king-

dom of that dying Lord, thus proclaiming his faith in the fact that Jesus had a kingdom, that Jesus was going through death into that kingdom and had the power to save a human soul and to take that soul from earth to live with him in that kingdom.

> "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.)

The prayer of this thief and the reply of Jesus thereto comprise the whole doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ. From the lips of a dying thief came the first confession to Christ of individual sin, the first announcement of the faith of a human being in the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the first expression of hope in the power and willingness of Christ to save the soul of a sinner in heaven. From the lips of the dying Christ came the first proclamation to the world that the soul of a repentant sinner would be saved through him in heaven.

3. The authenticity of the story of the penitent thief, though the record is seemingly contradictory as to the facts, is sufficiently established.

The four biographers of Jesus Christ differ quite materially as to some of the facts in regard to the story of the penitent thief. All four mention the

fact that Jesus was crucified with two others, one on each side of him, but only Luke states that one of them was saved.

Matthew says that both of the thieves reviled Christ. After stating that other persons mocked and reviled him and accused him of being unable to save himself, Matthew says:

> "The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth." (Matt. xxvii. 44.)

Mark also mentions the two thieves and says that both reviled Jesus.

> "And they that were crucified with him reviled him." (Mark xv. 32.)

Luke says that one of the thieves railed at Jesus, but that the other rebuked the reviler.

> "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" (Luke xxiii. 39, 40.)

John says less than either of the other authors of the Gospels and contents himself with the following:

> "They crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." (John xix. 18.)

It appears, therefore, that two of the Gospel writers, Matthew and Mark, say that both of the thieves reviled Jesus; that Luke says only one reviled him and was rebuked by the other; and that John simply mentions the fact that Jesus was crucified with two others, but does not call them thieves nor state anything they did or said.

Then it is true, as related by Luke, that one of the thieves confessed his sin and professed faith in Christ? I answer that it is and that a fair and reasonable construction of the entire record shows that it is true.

(1) It will be noticed that Luke alone gives the language used by the two thieves, while Matthew and Mark simply state their conclusions, and John says nothing about the matter.

(2) Both Matthew and Mark say that the chief priests and rulers among the Jews derided Jesus and called upon him, if he were indeed the Christ, to come down from the cross and save himself.

Now, Luke also says that the unsaved thief railed on Jesus; but he tells how he did so—that is, by saying: "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." The Revised Version modifies very much this saying of the thief by making it read thus: "Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us."

None of the followers of Jesus spoke to him from the time he was arrested and carried away to his trial until after his resurrection; and they very probably considered it improper to have done so, especially while he was dying. So it seems that Matthew and Mark considered that any one who interfered with the meditations of the dying Christ in effect joined the mob in reviling him; while Luke, who was the most intelligent and best educated of the three, drew the distinction between what was said by the impenitent thief who asked simply to be saved from physical death and what was said by the penitent thief who prayed to be saved from spiritual death.

Viewed in this light, there is no real contradiction in the record and nothing that discredits the doctrine of inspiration.

These little discrepancies simply prove the genuineness of the record:

(1) If only one person had attempted to write a spurious history of the Christ in four books, even if it had been possible for him to have adopted four different styles of writing as shown by the four books, he never would have inserted so many seemingly inharmonious statements, for fear of contradiction and detection.

(2) If the whole story as to the two thieves is a fiction, it would have been almost impossible for four authors not acting in concert to have invented the same story, even with the variations shown; and if four persons writing a fabricated history of the Christ had acted together, it is very unreasonable that these little discrepancies would have appeared.

(3) It is almost incredible that any person or any number of persons writing a purely fictitious history of the Christ could have invented an incident so meaningless as the story of the penitent thief, if it really was an invention, and yet fraught with such wonderful meaning, taking the story to be genuine.

CHAPTER XIII

The Crucifixion of Jesus

1. The rending of the veil of the temple at the time Jesus Christ died is the most significant event in all history and is the strongest possible proof of Christ's divinity.

Many wonderful incidents are recorded as having taken place at the time of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; but the most significant allegation to be found in all his history is the statement that the veil of the temple at Jerusalem was rent in twain at the time of his death.

> "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." (Matt. xxvii. 51.)

Did this really happen? Did some unknown and unseen hand tear away the veil that hitherto had shut out the Holy of Holies from all eyes except those of the high priest? Let us consider the facts and circumstances and see.

In the first place, this temple veil was a ponderous and very important part of the furnishings of the temple, and those who were not allowed to see within gazed upon it in awe. It was sixty feet in

length and thirty feet in width. It was wrought in seventy-two squares joined together and was of the thickness of the palm of a man's hand. It was so heavy that three hundred priests were required to manipulate it.

For such an immense piece of cloth to be rent from top to bottom by an invisible power just at the time when the Jews from all over the world, and in hundreds of thousands, were gathering in Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover was enough to startle the world.

The priests were there engaged in their ministrations at the very time. According to the record, the death of Jesus Christ occurred just after the ninth hour, or between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. This was the time of the offering of the evening sacrifices and the time when the paschal lamb was killed. It was the hour when the priests were officiating in the temple, and so the allegation that the veil of the temple was rent at that time is tantamount to saying that the Jewish priests were made eyewitnesses of the wonderful miracle.

The priests were very strict and punctual in performing their religious rites and ceremonies. Josephus tells us that the priests were so devoted and punctual in the discharge of their official duties that

when Pompey captured Jerusalem and entered the temple the priests continued to offer sacrifices until they were actually slain.

> And now did many of the priests, even when they saw their enemies assailing them with swords in their hands, without any disturbance, go on with their divine worship and were slain while they were offering their drink offerings and burning their incense, as preferring the duties about their worship of God before their own preservation. ("Wars of the Jews," by Josephus, Book I., Chapter VII.)

Two other important allegations must be considered in connection with the one in regard to the rending of the veil of the temple. It is alleged that there was darkness over all the earth for the space of three hours when Jesus Christ died and that the final moment was announced by a great earthquake.

Now, infidel critics call attention to the fact that no other historians mention these wonderful things at all. Once before that law which prohibited any one except the high priest from entering the Holy of Holies had been violated; and the pollution of the holy place by heathen feet is elaborately described by Josephus, the great Jewish historian, who wrote his history of the Jews after the wonderful incidents now under consideration are alleged to have happened.

Pompey captured the city of Jerusalem and en-

tered the temple. He and others went into the Holy of Holies, and their profanation of the place is thus described by Josephus:

> But there was nothing that affected the nation so much in the calamities they were then under as that their holy place, which had been hitherto seen by none, should be laid open to strangers; for Pompey and those that were about him went into the temple itself, whither it was not lawful for any one to enter but the high priest, and saw what was deposited therein—the candlestick with its lamp, and the table, and the pouring vessels, and the censers, all made entirely of gold, as also a great quantity of spices heaped together, with two thousand talents of sacred money. ("Wars of the Jews," by Josephus, Book I., Chapter VII.)

Tacitus also mentions the entry of Pompey into the holy place in the Jewish temple. (Tacitus's "History," Book V., Chapter IX.)

Titus, at the time of the final destruction of the temple, in A.D. 70, also went into the holy place, and his entry at that time is described by Josephus. (See "Wars of the Jews," Book VI., Chapter IV.) This, of course, was after the rending of the veil at the time of the death of Jesus Christ.

Christianity alone (that is, the great body of Christians, who believe in the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ) actually credit these miraculous occurrences—the story of the darkness, the

earthquake, and the rending of the veil of the temple. They say that Jesus Christ was the Messiah of ancient prophecy; that he came to fulfill and complete the old Jewish form of worship; that that system of worship, according to the prophecies and as ordained of God, was to cease in the offering of the Son of God as a final sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; that nature testified by the darkness and the earthquake that the Maker of all things was dying; that the rending of the veil of the temple by an unseen and miraculous power was the announcement from God himself that the final sacrifice had been made; that the old forms of worship had become obsolete; and that in the future nothing was to be veiled or hidden from any worshiper, but that God stood revealed to all mankind through the death of the divine Christ.

Those who reject the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ deny this testimony and say that no such miracles occurred. There are two classes of such disbelievers: (1) Those who deny that such a being as Jesus Christ ever lived and who reject all testimony concerning him; (2) those who admit that he was a real historical character, that he was a great teacher, and that he founded a new school of religious ethics, but who deny his divinity.

Now, the burden is on those who assert the divinity of Jesus Christ to prove the affirmative of this issue to the satisfaction of both of these classes. Any evidence would be sufficient if they were disposed to yield assent to it; but history teaches that they are not so inclined, and so it is necessary to produce convincing testimony.

The evidence is all on the side of the affirmative. Those who reject the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ offer no evidence on the subject, but simply deny the sufficiency of the testimony in favor of the affirmative of the issue. No witness has ever said that he was present at the time any event in the history of Jesus Christ is recorded as having happened and that no such thing occurred. This is more remarkable, perhaps, in the case of the rending of the veil of the temple at the time of the crucifixion than in respect to any other incident connected with Christ's history. As already shown, the priests must have been engaged in the discharge of their regular duties in the temple at the time this is alleged to have happened. So, then, the allegation is, in effect, that Jesus Christ, who had asserted most positively on his trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin only the night before that he was the Son of God, was being crucified under a decree

rendered at that trial, which some of these officiating priests had possibly attended, and that just after the expiration of a period of darkness which had lasted for three hours an earthquake occurred, and that the great veil which had shut out all view of the Holy of Holies was rent in twain in the presence of the Jewish priests, so that all men might gaze upon the sacred emblems therein deposited.

Why is it that there is no direct denial of these wonderful allegations from any source? Are the allegations true?

As already stated, the rending of the veil of the temple is not mentioned by Josephus, though he does mention the prior entry by Pompey into the Holy of Holies; and those who challenge this sacred record call attention to this omission of Josephus as discrediting the statement made by the biographers of Jesus Christ. The failure of Josephus to mention so important an event may be accounted for in several ways.

(1) Pompey's entrance into the holy place is mentioned by Josephus only in his "Wars of the Jews," and so we find that he is writing only of the military exploits of his people and not about their religion or system of worship. It would have been an awkward interpolation for him to have inserted,

either in his "Antiquities" or in his "Wars of the Jews," an account of any event that concerned only the establishment of the new religion which he and his people rejected.

(2) He evidently expected the life of the new religion to be of short duration and considered it only a religious craze. He mentions Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, and James the brother of Jesus, and undoubtedly condemns the persecution of them; and although he wrote within thirty-five years after the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, as stated in the record, he seems to be somewhat surprised that "the tribe of Christians so named for him are not extinct at this day." ("Antiquities," Book XVIII., Chapter III.)

(3) He was a Jew and was by birth a priest, although he evidently never officiated as such, and it could hardly be expected of him that he would record an event that tended so strongly to establish a religion that he rejected.

(4) He left Jerusalem and wrote his "Antiquities" and his "Wars of the Jews" in Rome, where the worship of heathen deities was required and where Christians who professed a belief in Christ had been put to death in great numbers for refusing to bow to the image of the emperor. The Chris-

tians in Rome, as elsewhere, insisted that the rending of the veil of the temple at Jerusalem signified the ending of the old Jewish system of worship and proclaimed the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the publication by Josephus of such significant evidence might have been taken as identifying him with the new, hated sect and might have imperiled his life.

Coming now to the evidence to sustain the record, I observe that the circumstance of the rending of the veil of the temple is mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. There are three witnesses, therefore, whose testimony is direct and positive.

The authenticity of the books which bear the names of these witnesses is questioned, however, by those who refuse to believe in Jesus Christ, and this calls for some proof of the genuineness of these records. I admit that it is difficult to furnish evidence that a book written when so few books were produced is authentic; and yet the evidence, it seems to me, is sufficient to satisfy any reasonable and unprejudiced mind.

(1) "The books which bear the names of the apostles and evangelists," says Lardner, "are known to be theirs in the same way we know the works of Cæsar, Cicero, Vergil, and Tacitus to be theirs—a unanimous or generally concurring tradition."

(2) History teaches us that quite a number of other works purporting to contain a life of Jesus Christ were handed down about the same time the four Gospels appeared, but that all of them were rejected as spurious by the fathers of the early Church except the four books generally accepted as genuine. This shows that Jesus Christ was generally recognized as divine at that time and also that the fathers of the Church sifted out the unreliable and retained only the genuine books, the authorship of which could be traced to the disciples of Christ.

(3) Polycarp, a contemporary of the apostles, attested his faith in Christ by suffering a martyr's death, and he teaches us the genuineness of these Gospels.

(4) Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria, all of whom lived in the second century, tell us that the four Gospels are genuine.

There is further testimony, more or less direct, that the veil of the temple was rent in twain at the time Jesus Christ expired. St. Paul, the authenticity of whose writings is as well attested as those of Josephus, Tacitus, or any other historian of that day, refers several times to this important incident.

The circumstantial evidence is also important.

Let us imagine Matthew, Mark, and Luke, or any other person or persons using their names, as writing a fictitious account of the death of Jesus Christ or a fabricated account of the death of some imaginary person sought to be palmed off on the public as the Son of God, and then imagine, of course, that no such event as the rending of the veil of the temple ever happened. Would they have discredited their own story by relating such a wonderful incident when they were bound to know that it would be utterly refuted? A writer of a spurious history of the Christ never would have dared to insert such a story. On the other hand, any one writing a truthful account of actual facts would have recorded such a strange event.

The veil of the temple was for concealment, and it was highly penal for any one to see the furniture of the holy place. The rending of this veil signified the destruction of the Jewish Church and the opening of a new and living way to God. It abolished forever the ceremonial law and cut down the partition wall between the Jew and the Gentile. It completed the mission of Jesus Christ on earth and announced to the world that the last sacrifice acceptable to God had been offered in the person of the Son of God.

CHAPTER XIV

The Resurrection

1. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is the basic principle upon which the entire structure of Christianity rests.

The supreme importance of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is well stated by St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians.

> "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (1 Cor. xv. 13, 14.)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is declared in the record to be the final proof of the fact that he is the Son of God.

> "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom i. 3, 4.)

A belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is declared to be absolutely essential to salvation.

> "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 8, 9.)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ completed his ministry on earth and perfected the new system of spiritual worship which he came to establish. So now individual repentance and preparation for the final judgment are demanded by every one, and Christ's resurrection is our assurance that he will judge us in righteousness.

> "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 30, 31.)

The preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection created great excitement among the people; and the leading Jews, the priests as well as the Sadducees, sought to suppress it.

> "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and

> the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." (Acts iv. 1, 2.)

St. Paul attributed his persecution largely to the fact that he insisted on preaching the doctrine of the resurrection, and so declared on more than one occasion:

> "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." (Acts xxiii. 6.)

2. It was necessary that Jesus Christ rise from the dead of his own volition in order to perfect his mission.

The Jewish conception of the resurrection was very vague and narrowly limited. One of their leading sects, the Sadducees, repudiated the doctrine altogether, and even the Pharisees did not believe in it, except for the Jews.

Whatever may have been the state of those who had been miraculously restored to life prior to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is expressly alleged that the Christ was the first to rise from the dead. This is the declaration of St. Paul in his celebrated speech before King Agrippa:

> "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing

> both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead." (Acts xxvi. 22, 23.)

Evidently the risen Christ was physically different from those who had been restored to life. He could pass through a closed door (John xx. 26) and could render himself unrecognizable to his own disciples, while in the case of Lazarus and others raised from the dead their bodies evidently resumed their previous material conditions. They were not free from death and no doubt had to die a second time, while Jesus Christ threw off the dominion of death forever.

> "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." (Rev. i. 18.)

After his resurrection Jesus had no fixed place of abode and did not remain with his disciples as before. He generally appeared unexpectedly and vanished just as mysteriously.

Possibly, however, the apostle simply meant to say that Jesus Christ was the first "to rise from the dead," as distinguished from being "raised from the dead," and that in the case of Jesus he gained a

complete triumph over death. This view accords with other Scriptural texts in which the resurrection of Christ is represented as placing him at the head of the Church.

> "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead." (Col. i. 18.)
>
> "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." (1 Cor. xv. 20.)

Jesus Christ, according to the record, declared expressly that he had the power to lay down his own life and to take it up again of his own volition.

> "Therefore doth my father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John x. 17, 18.)

According to the record, Jesus taught his disciples expressly that it was necessary that he should rise from the dead, and he seems to make his resurrection the culminating triumph of his mission.

> "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Matt. xvi. 21.)

By his resurrection Jesus Christ became the living Head of his Church, and without faith in the doctrine of his resurrection it is impossible to have faith in him.

> "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain." (1 Cor. xv. 16, 17.)

3. Did Jesus Christ actually rise from the dead, as alleged in the record?

According to the record, the evidence to sustain the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so far as the apostles are concerned at least, is both abundant in quantity and infallible as to character.

> "To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs." (Acts i. 3.)

Possibly the most important eyewitness as to the actual fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the apostle Paul. The authenticity and genuineness of his epistles, especially Romans, First and Second Corinthians, and Galatians, have never been questioned, and this fact lends special value to his testimony.

Again, the testimony of St. Paul is the most positive and direct of any to be found in the record. According to the record, he was miraculously con-

verted to a faith in the Christ; and afterwards, evidently referring to the "heavenly vision" that had wrought such a wonderful change in his heart, he declared plainly and emphatically that he had seen the risen Christ.

> "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." (1 Cor. xv. 8.)

Another very important and valuable piece of testimony is found in these unquestioned writings of St. Paul. He says that the risen Lord was seen by more than five hundred persons at one time.

> "After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep." (1 Cor. xv. 6.)

The statement that more than half of this great number of witnesses were alive at the time Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian Church is very significant. It was a bold challenge to all the world. Thus Jews and Gentiles were told that more than two hundred and fifty eyewitnesses as to the actual fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ were still alive and might be consulted by any one who doubted the written statement.

It seems that the rulers of the Jews remembered

the prediction of Jesus that he would rise again the third day after his death better than the disciples, because they said to Pilate:

> "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." (Matt. xxvii. 63.)

On the other hand, it is said of the disciples after the resurrection:

> "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." (John xx. 9.)

Possibly the Jews took counsel of their fears, while it was naturally impossible for the disciples to comprehend the fact that the Son of God could die; and, therefore, they were too stunned by the awful fact of the crucifixion to contemplate the resurrection.

The very fact that the biographers of Jesus were willing to write so many things of themselves that put them in a ridiculous attitude before the world shows that they were telling the truth. They had expected Jesus to become a great king; and when they saw him killed and buried without even attempting to exercise the supernatural power they had seen him manifest on other occasions, they

naturally became so shocked that they lost sight of his promises. This was natural, but it would have been both unnatural and unreasonable for them to have written these things about themselves if they had been untrue.

Suppose the charge should be made that the whole account of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as contained in the Scriptures is a fabrication and a falsehood. One thing is certain, and that is that whoever wrote the wonderful story expected it to be believed and desired that it should be accepted as true. This is shown by the marshaling of such convincing evidence of the fact of the resurrection. Would an inventor of such a story, writing with the evident desire that it should be credited as true, have inserted a statement that the disciples of the One who had risen from the dead of his own accord, those who had heard him say only a few days before that he was going up to Jerusalem and would be killed and would rise again the third day, had forgotten such an important declaration, so often and yet so recently made to them? Would the fabricator of the most wonderful story ever told have discredited it with such a false statement?

Whether Pilate actually feared that Jesus would rise from the dead and become the "king of the

Jews" in fact is not certainly known; but, at any rate, he readily granted the request of the chief priests and Pharisees that a watch be placed at the sepulcher and advised that extra precaution should be taken to make the same secure.

> "Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: . . . make it as sure as ye can." (Matt. xxvii. 65.)

The chief priests and Pharisees, finding the Roman authorities so ready to lend assistance, proceeded to carry out Pilate's instructions.

> "So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." (Matt. xxvii. 66.)

This guard of Roman soldiers, stationed at the sepulcher by authority of the Roman governor, and these leaders of the Jews represented the then known world. So the world kept watch for three days at the tomb of the dead Christ, to see whether his prediction that he would rise again on the third day would come true.

Three worlds answered. The world of inanimate nature answered by an earthquake; the world of men answered, and more than five hundred eye-witnesses declared that they had seen the risen Lord, while even the Jewish elders and Roman

guards admitted the resurrection by inventing and acting a falsehood in a vain attempt to conceal it; the heavenly world answered, and an angel sat upon the door of the empty sepulcher and proclaimed the fulfillment of the very prophecy the Jews had feared.

> "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said." (Matt. xxviii. 6.)

Following an account of the resurrection, a very important allegation is made in the record. It is alleged that some of the members of the watch went into the city immediately after the resurrection and "showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done," and it is further alleged that the chief priests and elders bribed the soldiers to report falsely that the disciples of Jesus came by night and stole him away while the guards slept. (Matt. xxviii. 11-13.)

This is a very serious accusation. It charges both the rulers of the Jews and the Roman soldiers with a crime, the rulers with the crime of giving a bribe and the soldiers with the offense of accepting it.

In addition to the charge of bribery, the chief priests and elders are accused of deliberate falsehood; and the guards are charged with a dereliction of duty that forfeited their own lives, because for

a soldier to sleep while on duty subjected him to the penalty of death.

Would such charges have been written within thirty-five years of the time of the happening of such events and within the lifetime, no doubt, of some of the principal actors if the accusations had been untrue?

Again, it is said that a great earthquake announced the resurrection of the Christ. This was the second earthquake that had occurred within three days. These were notorious events, if they actually occurred; and if they did not happen, the falsity of the written statement easily could have been proved. A person writing a false account of the resurrection would not have mentioned such a wonderful event if it had not, in fact, occurred.

Another very remarkable thing is said to have accompanied the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is alleged that a great number of dead persons were raised up and appeared alive in the city.

> "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.)

If we once step over the line into the realm of

the supernatural, our credulity need not hesitate at anything. A writer of a fictitious story of the resurrection, once he had crossed the line, might unfetter his imagination, and yet certain limitations would hamper his flight. If he expected to be believed, very naturally he would strive to avoid mentioning notorious events, such as earthquakes and the appearance alive of great numbers of persons who, as alleged, had been dead, especially if he alleged that the principal event had happened within the memory of persons who were living at the time such fictitious things were recorded. He would know that such a story could be refuted utterly by appealing to persons still living. On the other hand, to say that many graves gave up their dead and that the resurrected bodies appeared alive to other living persons is not stranger than to say that Jesus Christ threw off the shackles of death of his own power; and a writer giving a truthful account of real events would not hesitate to write about the graves giving up their dead in such numbers, while an inventor of the story of the resurrection of Christ would be afraid to mention an event as accompanying the resurrection that could so easily be disproved. Matthew wrote the story about the opening of the graves about the year A.D. 62, or

less than thirty years after the event is alleged to have happened; and it is only reasonable to presume that many persons were then alive who could attest the truth or falsity of the story. That the story should be false would be stranger than that it is true.

Jesus Christ wrought many miracles that prove his divinity, but the greatest of all was the miracle of his own resurrection. His last miracle was his return to heaven.

> "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." (Acts i. 9.)

CHAPTER XV

The Atonement

1. Adam and Eve were created with the same moral and spiritual status that their descendants possess, and the fall was simply the moral and spiritual lapse that actual sin always produces.

I subscribe unreservedly to the doctrine of the atonement for all sin made by Jesus Christ through his death upon the cross. I believe also in the doctrine of the incarnation and that Jesus Christ was both God and man.

I feel constrained to say, however, that the ancient dogma that man, whatever may have been his original organic form, once existed in a sinless state is without sufficient foundation to support it.

Under the doctrine of evolution there is no basis whatever for such a dogma, and it is not supported by the story of the creation as contained in the Bible.

According to the Biblical account, Adam and Eve were created with the capacity to sin, the propensity to sin, the inclination to sin, and the willingness to sin. This is conclusively shown by the fact that they did willingly sin.

According to the record, they violated the first and only law ever delivered to them. What that law really was it is useless to inquire, because it seems that it was intended only for them. They violated it, and it immediately became obsolete.

If it be true that Adam and Eve prior to the time of their temptation and fall were pure and sinless, and if God so originally created them and designed that they should so remain, then it necessarily follows that the coming of Jesus Christ to save their descendants from inherited sin, according to the orthodox doctrine upon this subject, was contingent upon the fall of our first parents. Such an idea is too absurd for consideration.

The world was old, as men reckon time, and millions of people had become scattered over the earth before God prescribed any general laws for the government of the people or gave them any regular system of worship or commanded them to worship at all.

A careful study of the laws and system of worship prescribed for the ancient Hebrews will show that neither the daily morning sacrifices required to be offered for all the people nor the annual sacrifice offered by the high priest in the holy place referred to sins already committed or to any in-

herited sin. The evident purpose was to bring and keep God and his people in close touch with each other and to teach the people that God was always ready to forgive sin. Expiation was for the future and not for the past, just as the expiation made by Christ when he died on the cross was for future generations and not for past ages. Any person who sinned, relying upon the promise to forgive sin made by God through the general expiatory service, had a right to appeal to that promise and claim forgiveness for his sin by bringing his own voluntary sin offering as required by law. Forgiveness of sin, after all, was strictly an individual matter and depended then, as it does now, upon the awakened desire on the part of the sinner to be forgiven.

2. The law, except the Ten Commandments, was temporary in character, and likewise the system of worship was of a temporary nature.

At the time the law was given and the system of worship that followed was prescribed the government of the Jews was a pure theocracy, and God came to earth and wrote the law with his own hand and personally prescribed the system of worship to be practiced by the Jews.

The constitutional law as contained in the Ten Commandments is permanent in its nature and is

the law to-day in every civilized country in the world. The lawmaking powers in all civilized nations recognize the fact that the law of the Ten Commandments is so fundamental in character that it is not necessary to legislate further in regard to the subjects embraced in that law, except to prescribe the punishment for a violation of the law. For instance, modern laws do not say that a man who kills another or who steals from another shall be guilty of a crime. We simply prescribe the punishment for the offense to suit the different notions of the various lawmaking powers.

The statutes and ordinances following the Ten Commandments were prescribed and communicated directly by God to man, but a bare reading of them will show that they are only temporary in character. They are utterly unsuited to modern conditions.

These statutes and ordinances include the system of worship prescribed by God for the Jews, and the very sacrifices prescribed pointed to a final expiatory sacrifice in the person of the Son of God. The prophets of God who followed the giving of the law and the establishment of the system of worship caught the idea and predicted the time and manner of the abandonment of the entire system of worship thus established directly by God.

3. The law preceded the establishment of any form of worship.

It is a very significant fact that no system of worship was ever prescribed until after the giving of the law in the Ten Commandments. As soon as the law was given it became necessary that there should be some propitiation for sin committed by a transgression of that law; and God prescribed a system of worship, including a propitiatory sin offering, and communicated the same directly to man.

Both the law and the method of worship were adapted to a people in a primitive state of existence; and the law, except the fundamental law as contained in the Ten Commandments, had respect for the frailties of human nature and allowed an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a blow for a blow.

This law, including the commandments, was to be taught to the people, and direction for teaching the law was given before any system of worship was prescribed.

> "And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them." (Ex. xxiv. 12.)

4. God alone could provide an atonement for sin, and this he did by making the atonement a part of the regular system of worship.

With the law came the consciousness of sin. A violation of the law awakened in man a sense of guilt and created in him, however imperfectly at first, a desire for an atonement, a desire that it was utterly impossible for him to satisfy.

This inability of man to make an atonement for his sin left him in a helpless condition. Within himself he could do nothing, and only God could provide an atonement. God did provide an atonement.

(1) A daily expiatory sacrifice for sin, which was offered on behalf of all the people and at the expense of all the people.

(2) A partly voluntary and partly compulsory sacrifice for individual sin in behalf of and at the expense of the individual.

As already stated, in the system of worship prescribed directly by God a special sacrifice designated as an atonement for sin was required to be made every day.

> "And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement." (Ex. xxix. 36.)

In addition to the other sacrifices prescribed, the high priest was required to enter into the Holy of Holies once a year and there make a general atonement for the sins of all the people. (Lev. xvi.)

5. With the coming of the Messiah a new law requiring only spiritual worship was announced, sacrifices lost their efficacy to save from sin, and a new atonement was provided.

I have already called attention to the fact that no atonement for sin was provided until after the law was given to the Jews and that the laws or rules prescribing how and when the sacrifices for atonement should be offered were, from their very nature, of a temporary character.

When Jesus Christ came, he prescribed a new law of worship that forever abolished the old sacrificial forms and rendered the Mosaic laws governing the worship of God through sacrifices entirely obsolete. The law prescribed by Jesus Christ was that all worship should be purely spiritual.

> "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 23, 24.)

Was it necessary, when the time came for the temporary system of worship to end, that the old system should cease and the new system be inaugurated by the sacrifice of a divine Being?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to look back and see what the old system of worship was, what it meant, and how it was superseded by the new system inaugurated by Jesus Christ.

Up to this time no people on earth had ever worshiped an invisible God in an intangible and invisible way. The change was so revolutionary and stupendous that no human being and no set of human beings could have wrought the reformation. In order to establish the old Mosaic system, God came to earth and wrote the law with his own finger and with his own mouth proclaimed that system of worship, giving the most minute details as to the method of worship and the places where such worship should be conducted.

God did not leave to men, inspired or uninspired, the writing of the law. Neither did he trust men to devise a system of worship. His system of worship is not the invention of man.

Let us notice some of the differences between the old worship and the new.

(1) Under the Mosaic dispensation all worship

was in public. Under the new dispensation men may worship in secret.

(2) Under the Mosaic law all worship had to be performed at certain places—at the tabernacle, synagogue, or temple. Under the new system men may worship God anywhere.

(3) Under the old system all worship was through the intervention of a priest. Under the new system a man prays directly to God and worships directly.

(4) Under the old system all worship cost something, although less costly sacrifices were permitted to be offered by the extremely poor. Under the new system worship may be without money and without price.

(5) Under the old system men worshiped in a tangible way through sacrifices which were handled by them and by the priests. Under the new system men worship an invisible God in an intangible and invisible way.

(6) Under the old system God communicated directly with man, either by speaking to him directly or through an angel or prophet. Under the new system neither the voice of God nor of angel nor of prophet is heard.

(7) Under the old system God often publicly

manifested his presence and approval to those who worshiped, making it almost like worshiping a visible God and receiving visible proof of the divine acceptance of the sacrifice. Under the new system God is always invisible and manifests himself only by spirituality.

> "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house." (2 Chron. vii. 1.)
>
> "And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the Lord; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering." (1 Chron. xxi. 26.)
>
> "And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces." (Lev. ix. 24.)

The history of the old Jewish system of worship as described in the Bible is fully confirmed by Josephus, the great Jewish historian. Indeed, he goes a step farther than the sacred history and speaks of several miraculous things as happening in connection with the destruction of that system of worship at the time Jerusalem and the temple were

destroyed by Titus in the year A.D. 70. (See "Wars of the Jews," by Josephus, Chapter V.)

The history of the Jewish system of worship teaches us:

(1) That God came to earth to establish it.

(2) That it was intended to be only temporary.

(3) That it was adapted only to a people in the early ages of the world and intended only for them.

(4) That the prophets of God foretold the abandonment of that system of worship and predicted that it should cease upon the offering of the Son of God as a final sacrificial atonement for the sins of the world.

(5) That the entire system of worship could be destroyed by man. It was destroyed by Titus when he captured Jerusalem and destroyed the temple and reduced the Jews to such abject poverty that they could no longer furnish the sacrifices.

Titus, however, ascribes the conquest of Jerusalem directly to God and says that it was impossible for men to have overthrown the towers. (See "Wars of the Jews," by Josephus, Book VI., Chapter IX.)

(6) That every person who committed sin was required to present a personal sin offering in atonement for his sin, and that the general sacrifice for

sin offered annually in behalf of all the people and as an atonement for all the people did not relieve a violator of the law of the necessity of making a personal and special sacrifice for his sin.

The daily sin offering was for all the people and kept them in touch with God, but every individual sin required a sacrifice for that sin.

In the same way the atonement made by Christ in behalf of all the people keeps them in touch with God, but each individual sin requires special repentance.

Now, if it was necessary that God should come to earth to establish a temporary system of worship, a system that was intended only for a certain race and that could be destroyed by man, was it not also necessary that God should come to earth to establish a universal and indestructible system of worship?

Religion is instinctive in man, as all human creatures are more or less religious and were so created.

A system of worship is simply the creature's method of expressing his religion, of reaching God through his religion. It is this that God must provide, because man by searching cannot find out God.

Under the Mosaic system the worshiper was required to furnish the sacrifice, but he had the express promise that God would meet him at the altar.

> "This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory." (Ex. xxix. 42, 43.)

The Jew was told expressly how and where he could meet God, but he was also told that the time would come when sacrifices should cease and when God would no longer meet his people at the door of the tabernacle.

Since the last and final sacrifice was to destroy the only method man had of reaching God and at the same time to furnish a new method by which man could reach God through purely spiritual worship, and since, in order to establish a spiritual relation between God and man, it was necessary that God should impart his spirit to man, it, therefore, became necessary that God should take on the nature of man, so that in the final sacrifice the human and the divine should meet. The union of the human and the divine in Christ made him the brother of man, so that in the death and resurrection of Christ both humanity and divinity constituted the final sacrifice for sin.

Under the old system of worship the people furnished the sacrifice, a sin offering for atonement; but it had to be repeated every morning, and finally that system of making atonement for sin was abolished by the offering of Jesus Christ.

Christ is a living sacrifice, a never-failing atonement, and in him man united with God in making an all-sufficient sacrifice and atonement for the sins of the whole world. This may sound like sacrilege to some; but it seems to me that if man could make atonement for sin under the old system of worship which was established by God by offering a sacrifice which was acceptable to God, he can certainly join with God in death as a sacrifice that creates, not restores, a spiritual bond of union between God and all humanity.

Christ came to earth and took on humanity and went with humanity through hunger, thirst, and death in order that all humanity might claim him as Brother and in order that the Spirit of God might unite with human spirit, so that man could reach God and worship him in spirit.

The sacrifice of the paschal lamb was wonderfully typical of the sacrifice of Christ. This view is corroborated not only in the required perfection of the lamb, but also in the fact that the crucifixion oc-

curred at the very time of the Passover and by the further fact that the offering of sacrifices by the Jews ceased during the observance of this feast.

Indeed, according to the record, Christ declared that the purpose of the Passover was fulfilled in him. Just before his death he took his disciples to Jerusalem for the purpose of eating the Passover with them; and when they had assembled in the "large upper room" where the feast was prepared, all twelve of the disciples being present, he said to them:

> "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." (Luke xxii. 15, 16.)

The expression "until *it* be fulfilled" clearly implies that Jesus meant to say that the Passover should cease with the sacrifice of himself. The purpose and meaning of the Passover would thereby be fulfilled "in the kingdom of God." He had gone to Jerusalem for the express purpose of partaking of the Passover before his death, and he had told his disciples on that occasion that he was to be put to death.

Again, Jesus expressly declared that it had been determined that he should be crucified.

> "And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined." (Luke xxii. 22.)

Peter and John and some of the other disciples go a step farther and declare that all who were concerned in the death of Jesus simply did what God had ordained to be done.

> "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." (Acts iv. 27, 28.)

I have already shown in the preceding chapter on the trial of Jesus that, according to the record, the high priest who presided at the trial and, indeed, every member of the council knew the divine nature of Jesus.

According to the record, then, the entire idea typified in the Passover was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and Jesus himself said that he was to go "as it was determined." Caiaphas, the high priest who presided at the trial of Jesus, "prophesied" that it was "expedient" that this same Jesus should die for the people; and Peter and John and others of the apostles in a shout of praise to God declared that all who were concerned in putting Jesus to death sim-

ply did what "thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

If we are to be governed by the record, corroborated as it is by tradition, prophecy, the fact of the abandonment of sacrifices by the Jews, the testimony of Christian martyrs who knew Jesus personally, and in many other ways, then it follows inevitably that Jesus was the Christ, a divine Being; that he voluntarily became incarnate and walked with humanity the path of a human life; and that he was offered on the cross as a final sacrifice and atonement for all sin, so that in and through him humanity reached up to God, spirit touched spirit, and man was enabled for the first time to see God spiritually and to worship him in spirit.

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